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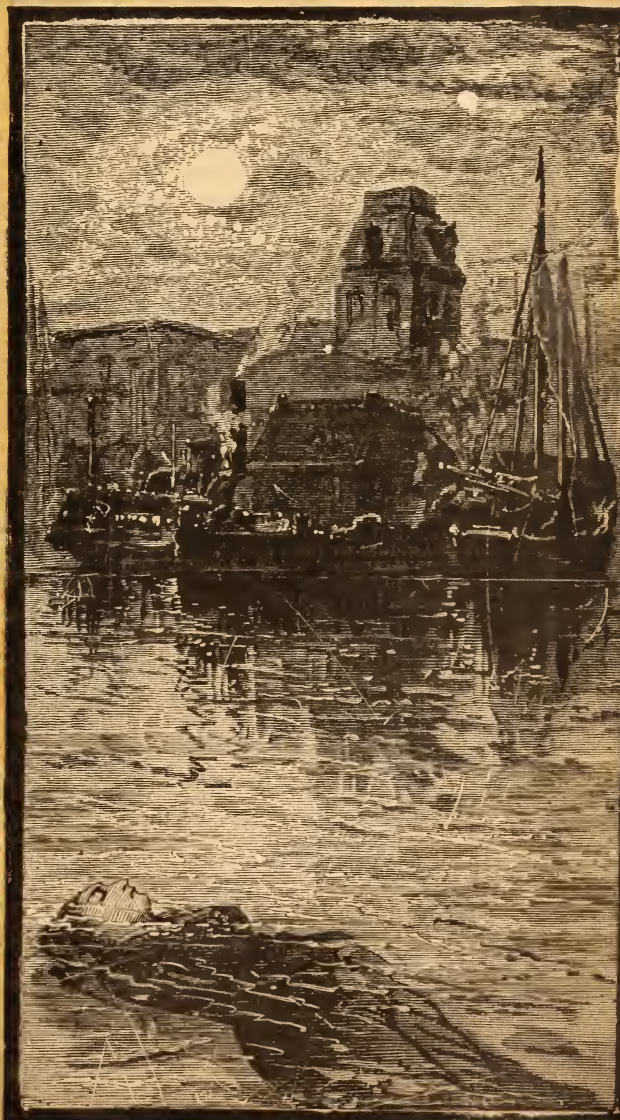


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BY
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NIGHT



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— PUBLISHER —

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LA METROPOLITAN SIREN.

THE
MYSTERIES
OF † NEW † YORK.

A SEQUEL TO
"GLIMPSES OF GOTHAM," AND "NEW YORK BY
DAY AND NIGHT."

WITH 23 ILLUSTRATIONS.

PUBLISHED BY
RICHARD K. FOX, PROPRIETOR POLICE GAZETTE,
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P R E F A C E.

There are, at least, three works in the romantic literature of the present century which bear a somewhat similar title to this one: "The Mysteries of Paris," by Eugene Sue; "The Mysteries of London," by G. W. M. Reynolds, and the "Mysteries of the Quaker City," by George Lippard. Each of these is a strong story, replete with romantic and sensational interest, bristling with stirring scenes and powerful word pictures. Yet to-day they are forgotten.

Why is this?

It is because they are, after all, but romances, and the popular taste for fiction changes, shouldering the best of old favorites into the corner in favor of far less meritorious novelties whose charm of newness atones for their shortcomings. The scenes these supplanted veterans describe belong to the past. The present generation recognizes no resemblance between them and the life that goes on about it. They lack fact enough to become history, and their romance is faded, dim and dull to a people which has outgrown the surroundings in which that romance was placed.

But with our "Mysteries of New York" it is a vastly different case.

The scenes we depict are being enacted about us every day, for we write of the great metropolis of the present, of the third greatest city in the world as it is in the year of grace 1881. It is the real life of this tremendous gathering of men, this treasure-house of wealth and asylum of poverty, this abode of virtue and haunt of crime, which we portray with pen and pencil. It is its ins and outs, bright scenes and sombre mysteries which artist and author combine to give an enduring place in literature.

No romance here but that of fact, which has truly been said to be more startling than any fiction; which fascinates as no production of the novelist's fancy can, because we know it to be true, and which we remember long after the creations of genius, the fanciful children of the most brilliant inventions, are forgotten.

In two previous works, "Glimpses of Gotham" and "New York

by Day and Night," we have commenced a panorama of life in the great city which we hope to continue, still further cementing between ourselves and our readers a bond of amity which will be as pleasing to us as we hope to make it delightful to them. There is no lack of subjects. They surround us on every hand, each vying with the other and all claiming the justice of equal attention. When we have extended that justice to them, and lay our pen aside, we shall have given to the world such a compendium of New York as has never yet been dreamed of; such a record of existence in the metropolis of the western continent in all its varied phases, such an unveiling of its mysteries and exposition of its vices, virtues, good points and evil practices, as will leave the world no excuse for saying that it does not know Gotham.

Under our guidance the stranger may travel New York from end to end, unimperiled by the dangers which the newcomer in the metropolis is exposed to. Its snares or pitfalls can have no peril for the stranger who recalls our warnings of them, nor need any of its pleasures be beyond his reach. The same mentor who warns him of what to avoid and puts him on his guard against whatever may menace him, points the way also to the brighter side of city life and tutors him how its enjoyment may be attained.

The elephant in the menagerie has its showman. The metropolitan elephant has one, too, and the pages of our books are the programme of the gifted beast's performances. As the man at the circus would say, these performances must be seen to be appreciated. We may add, however, that they will be all the better appreciated if their nature is understood beforehand, and that no small number of them will not be appreciated at all unless we have been permitted to point them out and tell how they may be reached.

CHAPTER I.

METROPOLITAN SHAMS.

False prosperity has always been one of New York's besetting sins. It makes no difference whether there is a "boom" or a "crash" down town, some one always has money and the sparkle and veneer up-town doesn't seem to grow dim. The stranger passing through our gates and looking around a bit, which operation generally includes tak-



A NIGHT HAWK'S EXPERIENCES.—(P. 15.)

ing lottery-ticket strolls with confidence men, hears the same bustle, gets fined the usual amount for getting drunk, notices as many diamonds at the play and as many nobby establishments dashing through the park, and after pondering upon it for a while comes to the conclusion that Gum Creek, W. Va., and the rest of the world may be going to the devil, but Gotham is solid.

Not necessarily so. There is a great deal of theatrical arrangement about this city and so delicate a way of making the best show possible, of utilizing shams so deftly that they deceive the most expert, that her reputation for dash, "go," and brilliance seems never to suffer, no matter how deep the gloom elsewhere.

The town is really a diamond, half first water, half paste. It is radiant all the time, and old a resident as I am I can never tell whether I am living in an atmosphere of opulence or prostration.

My only financial barometer is my landlady,

And judging from her appearance this morning as she poured the second cup of coffee for me I guess it will be pretty heavy weather up around that way shortly.

I was foolish enough to bet \$20 that I could do that "15" puzzle in three hours.

I couldn't do it in three years.

So I told her that, owing to my contribution to the famine fund--and I am proud to say in all seriousness that I did what I could to further one of the noblest movements of this or any other age--and an unfortunate speculation in sea cotton, it was very low tide with me and she would have to go over for some time along with a pair of boots and some other unfinished business.

But let us return to the shams.

In Philadelphia they do not have them. Everything in that pleasant city is genuine. Its business men make no pretensions. They do not sell goods, a sample in one hand and a brandy cocktail in the other, and as a rule down on their Third street, which corresponds to Wall, their speculation is as conservative as a flutter in cemetery stocks, which, indeed, not infrequently takes place.

They go home in the street car, and it is home. The whole house. You are invited to supper and as you consume it you perceive the same substantiality about the house.

No young men come bawling into the parlor just as you are going

to bed, smelling of brandy and tobacco and just from a concert saloon where the plays have been indecent and the songs ribald.

How is it in Boston? Again no shams. That "Common" is certainly genuine. If you should intimate in any manner that that Common was not everything that has been claimed for it—and there are very few romantic reminiscences left unclaimed—Boston would rise in its might and hang you higher than the spire of Faneuil Hall.

The Boston baked bean, is he solid? Rather. No sham here any more than there is in Wendell Phillips or Ralph Waldo Emerson, or those young ladies who in the pleasant afternoons promenade Washington street with Greek grammars in their grasp. When they marry they make no sham wives, but settle right down to science and domesticity. They rock the cradle and read Herbert Spencer, and if the prim young husband dares to come home without the *Atlantic Monthly* on the day of its publication he has his Mercantile Library ticket taken away from him and no brown bread goes with his Sunday morning dish of baked beans for three weeks.

You who are not Bostonians have no idea of the torture this implies.

But we will take a Sound boat and return to Gotham, into whose superficial and unreal features of get-along-ativeness I shall now plunge without more ado.

Did you know, gentle reader, that there are business men in New York who hire wedding presents? Fact. It is also a fact that on the other hand there are men in New York who buy wedding presents from families who are only too anxious to realize.

What is sentiment and romance now? Not much. Not much in New York anyhow. You may find genuine love and Tupperism among the hay ricks and daisies of the country, but we have no time for it in Gotham. We want money. So the gifts of uncles, aunts, grandmothers, etc., (no Pinafore, you see) are swept into a bag while the bride tucks the bank check away in her purse.

Now for the other matrimonial scene. The father of the family is informed that young Jones has at last asked Felicia to make him a happy man and Felicia has answered in cooing terms that she would try real hard to do so. It is desirable that this match should take place. Felicia is not a bad-looking girl and everything depends upon her. They played her five seasons at Saratoga, but she never scored



THE KITCHEN BELLES BEAU.-(P. 25.)

a "trick." The nearest approach was her acceptance of the hand of a Silesian count.

She would have been a countess in a day or two, only an Illinois detective came along and took the count back to Alton where he has five years yet to work out for seeing how near he could imitate another man's handwriting.

It was a good imitation and really deceived the teller of the bank.

As a general rule these dukes, counts and members of her majesty's Pink Dragoons, whom you run across at Saratoga, are well up in penmanship, an accomplishment which they draw upon when they get well down in the world.

Felicia having failed again, the family of Thompsons, *pere, mere*, Felicia, and Caroline returned to New York.

"See here," said the old man, who is in the pickle business in Whitehall street, "this won't do, Mrs. Thompson, pickles are going to the devil, and Felicia has again cost me five thousand dollars. You would take this infernally expensive house; you would give a party that you owe for yet; heaven only knows how much you owe about here. I only know that I have to take the stage two blocks further up the street than usual in order to avoid the butcher who is always at the door looking for me, with a handful of mutton chops in one hand and a cleaver in another—and Felicia not married yet."

Of course this is not said before the young lady.

Gloom rests upon that mansion until young Jones commits himself. Then the old man smiles a grim smile, and when he is assured that Jones has the article that would soothe even a butcher, and has it in profusion, he goes right off and buys a volume on "Breach of Promise" cases, which he consumes down at the office after the green and lean office boy, who devours forty pickles a day, has gone home.

"If Jones fools Felicia," this modern stern "parient" says, "he won't fool me. I have notes out that must be taken up, or I'll be in Red Leary's cell in Ludlow street jail."

But Jones has no idea of fooling any one. He is really in love with Felicia, who reminds him of a statue he saw in Greece. Or was it in Rome? He can't think. It doesn't matter.

He brings her caramels, and they look through the stereoscope together. Mr. Thompson sells his "Breach of Promise Cases" to a curb-

stone bazar in Nassau street, and buys his gloves for the wedding with the proceeds.

That's all very well, but how about the wedding presents? As a general rule, Job's turkey was an Astor or a Vanderbilt compared with the family of the Thompsons. They were all country people, too; that offensive kind with big red hands and Timothy seed in their hair who send you up a barrel of sheep-nose apples and a bag of walnuts, and then want to come to town and board it out, and have you take them to the theatre. To commence with, Felicia would die rather than have any of them at the ceremony.

A little investigation fixed it all, and when the evening came there was a long table in the parlor, one glittering mass of silver testimonials, all ticketed, like dogs at a bench show.

In the kitchen sat a rough-looking chap whose business it was to keep an eye on the soup tureens, the gold-lined butter dishes, the exquisite tea-sets and all the rest of the collection.

The wedding was a very fine affair. The old man, knowing it was the last occasion, still further depleted his emaciated bank account and drew for all that was needful.

Felicia had to confess all to Jones, of course. But as Felicia possessed the "bossy" qualities, and her husband was constructed on the *blanc mange* order of architecture, there wasn't much trouble.

Presumably Felicia went on a wedding tour, and that brings us to a new phase of metropolitan "shams." I don't mean to intimate that you can hire a *trousseau* in New York, nor indeed do I think there lives and breathes any bride who would be willing to start her matrimonial career in that manner; but I boldly assert, and can demonstrate it at the expense of any doubter who will send me up to Saratoga for that purpose, that a considerable portion of the startling costume changes assumed by the young ladies are rendered possible by the hire system introduced into New York by Parisian *modistes* and worked so charmingly to their financial advantage.

The genuine aristocratic world are responsible for this practice of hiring trunk load after trunk load of the most elaborate costumes. They wear dazzling raiment, made by Worth, and paid for by millionaire papas. How, then, are girls of the Felicia class going to keep their end up if a kind Providence had not thrown the boulevard milliners in their way? If you want to go to Saratoga to catch a husband whose duty



THE YOUNG MAN FROM THE COUNTRY.

it shall be to buy dresses you must nevertheless have these dresses in which to glitter and shine while catching him. If you can't own a dress the next best thing is to hire one.

I know a proud young man, rather impecunious, it is true, who keeps a valet; and they get along very well with one dress-coat between them. My friend always dines in a gorgeous silken jacket when he has invited anyone home, and the valet waits in the dress-coat. After dinner host and guest go to the opera, my friend in full dress. But it's the same coat.

When an impressario takes the trouble to go to Europe and engage at an enormous figure a dramatic or lyric artist, he makes up his mind at once that if there isn't a dollar in New York that artist nevertheless shall create an immense furore on her or his arrival.

After all the usual newspaper squib business has been attended to, the thing is to get a part of the excited populace on the wharf to meet the steamer. Say it is an opera bouffe soprano. All you have to do is to go to Union Square and pick out the young men who loaf about there earning a more or less precarious existence by pretending to be interested in music or the drama. They are shows, too, but how they manage it is another metropolitan mystery which I shall take time to probe one of these days.

You explain your plan to these elegants. They are to have a ticket for the first night, a pair of gloves, and an invite to a little spread, if they in their turn will scare up a dress-suit somehow and be on the wharf when the steamer arrives to throw boquets and howl. They accept, of course. What is the consequence?

The poor prima, maid and lap-dog look over the rail and see all New York in an uproar. The impressario went down the Bay on a tug. He points out one of Delmonico's waiters as the mayor of the city, and a piano tuner does duty for the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.

She already sees herself returning to France, loaded down with diamonds. The press is so great she can scarcely reach her carriage.

All sham! All "xx extra sham!"

The show doesn't go; in two weeks she is sparring for her manager, who has gone to Rochester to run a female walking match.

In another fortnight Mlle. Tympana is living in a South Fifth avenue boarding-house where it always smells of garlic, waiting for an engagement.

The most expensive and useless sham that I know of is forcing a poor play a hundred nights in New York city, so that it can go on the road with that record.

Night after night there isn't the gas-bill in the house, and yet the manager will sit up in his little den, writing advertisements for the next day's papers, in which people are represented as behaving like Zulus in their struggles to get to the box-office.

This done he goes across the street to the beer saloon to get a "schooner" on credit, and to borrow the price of an American District Telegraph boy.

The place where Gotham's shams are to be seen in rich profession is naturally enough Wall street. I used to be a great habitue of that enchanting region, and have left more there than I ever expect to own again, unless it should be my happy lot to fall in with Stewart's body late some night when I am going home.

But the quarter has a great fascination for me, especially since they have opened a mining exchange. There are the shares to watch, and it isn't a bad idea to keep a strict lookout when dealing with the astute gentlemen who represent this and that Bonanza stock.

Talk about the "shams" and swindling of the oil furore.

Since the Arabian Night stories of Flood and O'Brien the air from San Francisco to Sandy Hook has been crowded with golden kites, a millionaire at the end of each string,

And yet—

But let us enjoy the dream.

CHAPTER II.

NEW YORK NIGHT-HAWKS.

The public cabs and coaches of New York are subject to a yearly license fee of three dollars and five dollars respectively. Last year over 1,500 such licenses were taken out. Of this number about one-eighth of the vehicles are kept on night service, and form that class of public conveyance known to the initiated as night-hawks. By this substitution of a single letter the difference between day and night hacks is defined with magnificent expressiveness. The night-



AN EAST SIDE JAMBOREE.—(P. 200.)

hacks are real birds of prey, whose beaks, or rather doors, are ever agape for spoil.

"There aint no use talking," said a grizzled old night hackman to me, over a 3 A. M. tumber of gin and sugar; "swindles is swindles, and that's the name to give it. I'll lay my hack and hosses again a five cent nickel you can't find no wus hornswagglers onto the streets 'n we are. But what kin we do? People lays theirselves out for it, and when a man's led into temptation you can't blame him for not being delivered from evil. 'Opportunity makes the thief,' as the old woman said when the cat licked the pizened milk and croaked."

This ingenuous and picturesque admission establishes the fact with which this chapter has to deal; that the night-hawks of New York are birds the average citizen had best beware of.

Nowadays the best place to find the night hacks is on Sixth avenue and Twenty-seventh street, in the neighborhood of the gilded show places for tawdry vice, which have sprung up in that section of late years like mushrooms. From eleven o'clock until day begins to dawn they line the avenue and the cross streets to the westward of it, drawn up along the curb as one sees vehicles waiting in the neighborhood of the Academy of Music on the night of a great ball. On the avenue they stick to the western curb, that side of the street being pre-eminently the busy one, waiting for spoil.

And as a general thing they do not wait in vain. The drivers, when not moistening in some convenient hostelry, loll on their boxes and lounge on the sidewalk, hailing passers-by.

A stray drunken man is snapped out of the crowd which tramps along until after midnight in an unbroken stream, or a stranger who has wandered out of his depth and got lost, a door bangs, a hack rattles off, and the line closes up to fill the gap left by this defection.

From eleven till one o'clock this casual business is about all that is done. Then the dance-houses begin to disgorge, as if their contents had made them sick, as they certainly would any building of respectable attributes. Flash men and flashier women, inflamed with drink, reel out from their hot, tainted precincts, and stagger as the cool air outside blows upon them.

"They don't feel their lush inside," said a hackman of an observant turn. "But when the cold air strikes 'em, drink comes all to wonst. Then we take a hand in the game."

The best business of the Sixth avenue night-hawks is done with freights of this character. It lasts from one o'clock till nearly three. When the dance-house lights are extinguished and their audiences vanish, the hawks prowl off, or to use the expression of the craft, "goes cruising."

Next to Sixth avenue, Union and Madison squares are the chief stands of the night-hawks, though they may be found, singly or in braces, or small coveys, at the various ferries, and in front of the principal hotels. They remain stationary there until about two o'clock. Then they begin to cruise.

The principal cruising is done along Broadway from the Fifth Avenue Hotel to Twenty-fourth street, and on Sixth avenue from Twenty-third to Thirty-fourth. Some years ago, when the great faro and keno games in Houston street were in their glory, when Greene and Wooster streets were palisaded solidly with sinks of shame too vile to name, and when Houston and Bleecker streets were thickly sown with flaring dance-houses, Broadway from the Prescott House to Union Square was a gold mine to the night-hawks. The Bowery, too, from Chatham Square, where the only hack stand on the east side is now located, as far up as Grand street, was a rich cruising ground. But only a couple of sleepy hacks now hold the night watch at the commencement of East Broadway, and a stray cruiser prowls Broadway, below Union Square, though at Clinton place a couple of hacks can usually be found the night through.

"There ain't no more life down here nor there is in a biled clam though," said the proprietor of one of these, dolefully. "There's only one bank open on Broadway below Twelfth street. We pick a winner up from there now and then, but bless your boots, if it wasn't for the lushes we might as well chop up the hacks to cook the hosses over, for we wouldn't git nothin' else to eat."

Cruising is a simple process. The night-hawk scents its prey from afar, as it jogs s'owly along the quiet street.

Perhaps it is a couple, strolling and talking in the disjointed sentences of tired men, perhaps a drunkard, ziz-zaging to his neglected bed. As soon as his eyes light on them the driver runs up beside them, and keeping pace with them, as close to the sidewalk as the curb will permit his wheels to come, solicits patronage, by calling:

"Hack, sir? Don't you want a hack?"

Two blocks is the maximum distance a night-hawk will pursue his quarry. If he does not capture it then, he treats it to a round of cursing and drives back in search of better luck. Sometimes two hawks pounce on the same victim. Then things are lively till one of them secures him. As a general thing, however, the hawks do not interfere with one another.

Drunken men are the night-hawks' chief prey. Winning gamblers also always drive home after a fortunate night at cards. These latter are very liberal, as men who make money after their fashion commonly are.

"Many's the fiver I've got for taking a winner ten blocks in the gray of the morning," said Red Barney, one of the best known of our night-hawks, "and they never think of offering less than two. Ah, the boys isn't such a bad lot after all, though their ways is queer."

There are some very queer phases of night-life in the metropolis revealed to the night-hawk, as may be supposed. One is represented by a Parisian fashion which came into vogue a year or so ago. This is the fashion of driving about all night. A man will get so drunk that he does not care to go home and expose himself. Instead of going to a hotel he will hire a hack and go jogging about all night, and sleep his debauch off inside. Ladies of easy manners frequently resort to the same sobering process after a wet night at dancing halls.

Hackmen hate to drive women about alone. They say they are mean payers and when they are drunk invariably create a disturbance, break windows and otherwise interfere with the internal economy of the vehicle.

Young men on a spree frequently hire a hack and insist on the driver joining them in their debauch. He is usually willing enough, for your night-hawk is a thirsty bird with what Artemus Ward aptly termed a "talent for drinking." Some very curious episodes take their rise out of this. A couple of weeks ago some laborers going to work at daylight found a hack standing in the middle of the Bloomingdale road near the insane asylum. The horses were asleep. Inside were the driver and two fares in a similar condition. An empty brandy bottle told the tale as plainly as words.

A literary man of some local fame was arrested for fast driving. A policeman found him tearing down Fifth avenue at four in the morning on the box of a public cab. The driver was dead drunk inside.

The delinquent, in answer to the judge, said: "Well, I got a poor fellow drunk and I thought it was only fair that I should drive him home." His philanthropy cost him \$20.

"When I had my stand at the Grand Central Hotel," said the night-hawk already alluded to as Red Barney, "I had a very curious customer. He was an old Frenchman, a reglar Jack-a'-dandy. He lived in Bond street, and I allus believed on a income he got from home. Once a month, allus between the first and fifth and sixth, he would turn up at the hotel about midnight, dressed up to the nines, gloves an' all.

"He would drive to a French gambling house in Bleecker street—the Cafe de la Marine—stop there just a hour then go down to the Battery, stoppin' at a French place in North Moore street, then drink his way through four French bars on the Bowery, wet up at a Italian hotel on Seventeenth street and stop another hour at the French madam's restaurant.

"Every place he stopped he sent a drink out to me. At the madam's he would git a bottle of brandy and drive straight out Fifth avenue until day broke, when I had to take him home.

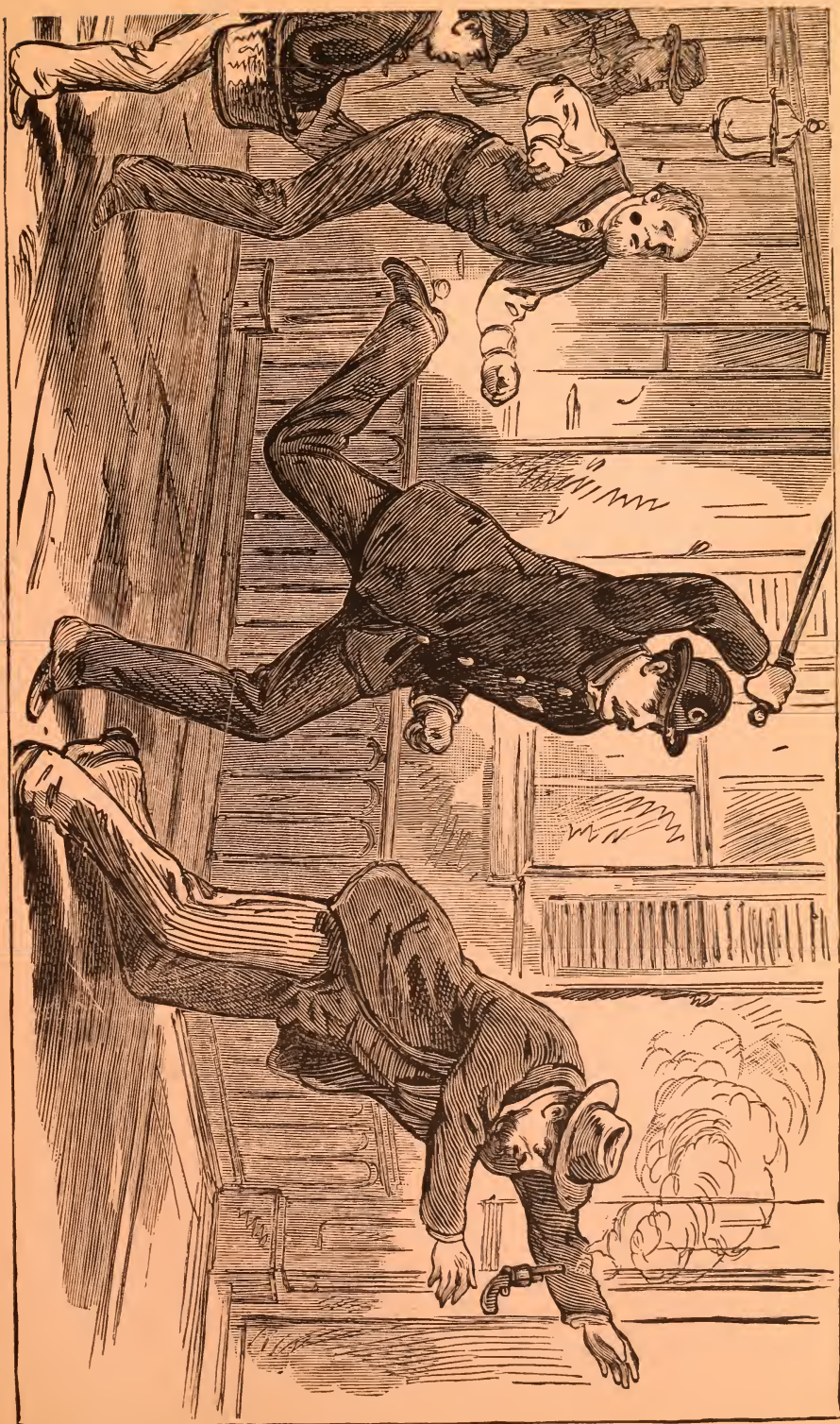
"Liquor made him onsteady and he used to look like a corpse when he got out, with his black wig and his dyed mustash, and his face white with brandy. He paid me \$10 a trip and when he left always said: 'Good fortune, driver.' The boys used to call him 'Red Barney's Luck,' and I believe he was, too, for I never made as much money as I did then."

Almost as queer a character as "Red Barney's Luck" was a character Tom Finn, now one of the Sixth avenue brigade, tells about. Tom was driving from in front of the Astor House in those days and had one of the neatest coupes in the city.

One night a gentleman came out of the hotel and engaged him. He wore an ulster, then an unknown garment here. He was an Englishman and had a list of places on a slip of paper, to which he told Tom to drive him. They were all gambling and up-town houses.

"He kep it up ivery other night for a month and tin days," said Tom, "thin he disappeared. Wan noight, long afterward, I was drivin' down Broadway an' I passed a hack comin' up. As we ginerally does, I hailed him. 'What luck?' says I. 'As drunken a divil as ever ye see,' says he. And whin he spoke ye might 'a knocked me off my

RUN DOWN AT LAST.



seat wid a broken straw. 'Twas me ould customer of the Asthor House. He was drivin' for Kennedy thin and now he's coachman to a family on Fifth avenue."

The reader may recall, a couple of years ago, the old Austrian lady who called herself the Countess Heinrueth and who actually lived in a public hack for a couple of days before the disgusted driver delivered her to police headquarters. Her case is more than paralleled by the following experience of a Madison Square night-hackman named Morris.

At 11 o'clock one night a hackman hailed Morris. He had a lady inside whom he had taken from a Cunard steamer that afternoon. She was looking for some friends and, as he had to go back to the stable, he desired to transfer her to Morris to continue her quest. The arrangement was assented to.

"And a gay old job I had, I can tell you," said that worthy. "She was a fat, good-looking woman of about forty and she had two leather bags with her. Well, bust my bones, if I didn't drive her to twenty-three different places. At last it got so late that I was afraid to ring the bells any more and wanted to plant her at a hotel, but she wouldn't plant. Then I told her I had to go to the stable. 'Take me there,' says she, 'I like your hack, so I don't mind sleeping in it.' When we got to the stable she gave me \$5. 'Call me at eight,' said she. I was so flabbergasted I couldn't make a kick. I told the stable people and as they didn't object we concluded to let her be. We thought she was crazy, you see.

"Well, you may imagine I was out early the next morning to see what had happened. She had waked up, washed herself at the hydrant and got some breakfast at a restaurant, which she ate in the hack. We started again and hunted around all day. No use. That night she slept in the hack again. She had a pile of money and paid liberally, feeding me and giving me drinks. Besides, she was quiet and ladylike all along, so I didn't care to get rid of her roughly and she stuck like a leech, so I couldn't put her out any other style. The afternoon of the second day we found a party that knew her and she let me go. She paid me altogether \$25 and I've seen her many a day since driving down the avenue in a swell private turnout."

It is difficult to get at the earnings of a night-hawk, dependent as they are on luck and his own nerve. They have a regular scale of

prices, adjusted by the license office, but they never adhere to them and few of their casual customers know enough to compel them to. Each public conveyance is required to carry a printed card defining the rates of fare the driver is permitted to ask, but this is usually hid away so cunningly as to be undiscoverable.

Then, if a fare is drunk or green enough, the night-hawk will drive him around till a ride of a few blocks will be prolonged into miles.

Overcharges, if reported at the License Office in the City Hall, cost the offending hackman his license, but such complaints are rare.

The reason is a simple one. People who know enough to report a hackman also know enough not to have any occasion for a report. The wisest plan of procedure with a night-hawk is to arrange terms with him beforehand.

On the other hand, when terms are not arranged beforehand and an overcharge is made, a little game of verbal bluff never fails to bring it within limit.

"We don't dare be pulled up for overcharging," remarked a cabman. "Of course we all try to get as much as we can. If you think it's too much and refuse to pay we can only call a copper and give you in charge. We don't care to do that, so we come down to the limit. Every city man that knows anything bulls us down now and a \$3 dollar fare from a man about town is a big one. Yet fifteen years ago we wouldn't look at less than that amount for a short drive, and thought nothing of making fifty dollars a night and even more."

"How much do you average a night?"

"If I work an average of six dollars a night I'm lucky now and I own my own turnout. Many's the night I don't pick up a penny. About half the night hacks belong to the drivers. The others are stable hacks like most of the day ones, and the driver has to turn in so much a night to the owner and keep what is over. At these rates you can't much blame us for trying to make all we can."

Another source of revenue to the night-hawk is the houses of ill-fame, which pay him a percentage on all the customers he brings to them.

A great source of complaint against the night-hawks used to be the robberies committed in them. Drivers in the old days were arrant rascals—bandits of the box, whose hands were against every purse.

The license law was very lax and it was next to impossible to bring a theft home to the robber, since his victim was usually beyond the power of swearing to anything and he knew his trade well enough not to have any other witnesses.

But every now and then one would be caught in the act and sent on a journey to the granite mansion with a melodious name.

A vigorous administration of the license law did much to put a stop to it, too, for now every cab is registered and the police can lay their hands on a driver almost as soon as a complaint is made. Consequently actual robberies in hacks are rare.

But losses are still common enough and will be as long as people who patronize night hacks have anything to lose.

By law, all articles found in hacks are to be turned over to property clerk St. John at police headquarters, by whom they are advertised in the *City Record*. Such as he receives, however, are of little value. Money which escapes the careless hands of drunken men and jewelry rarely find their way to him, if they ever do.

Most of the night hackmen acknowledge to having, from time to time, picked up articles of value in their vehicles. One once found \$1,800 in bank notes. Another gleaned a diamond brooch worth nearly as much.

Most of the money found is, however, in crumpled lumps and in small sums. The jewelry consists of pins and rings, with very rarely a watch.

"The curiouest find I ever had," said Abel Donnelly, "was one night a year ago. I had been on the stand for nine hours and hadn't seen the ghost of a call. It was a mizzable, wet, cold fall night, so at last I piled onto the box and druv to the stables. When I opened the coach door there I was reglar paralyzed like. There, onto the back seat, sat one of the prettiest girls I ever see. She had a pale face, big blue eyes, hair the color of the silk of new corn, and hands like a baby. She was bareheaded and wore a black dress and I could see the stuff was as rich as it was plain.

"'Hello! Hello!'" says I, and I tell you it was about all I could do.

"She had been setting straight up, looking at me with her eyes wide open. At the sound of my voice she gave a violent start, shut her eyes, opened them again and ripped out a scream fit to raise the dead. Then she dropped as a lump.

"We ran for a doctor. He put her to bed and next morning she was all right.

"A somnambulist, you know. She belonged to wealthy folks that lived on Fourteenth street, near the square, and had wandered out that night and slipped into my hack just before I started."

There are instances of honesty on the part of our night-hawks recorded, in spite of the bad name they bear. The late Edwin Adams used to tell one. He had returned to this city from a professional tour, and engaged a cab at the Pennsylvania railroad ferry to take him up town. He had \$600 in bank notes in a hand-satchel—and it was about all the money he owned in the world. When he got out he forgot it, and in the excitement of meeting friends in the hotel bar it continued to remain unnoticed by him. He went to his room and was undressing when there came a knock at his door, and a rough-looking man entered. It was the cabman, and he had the satchel in his hand. "So, before I actually knew I had lost it, it was returned to me," Adams remarked. "I am sorry to say I was so overjoyed that I gave my man \$25."

"How do you mean sorry?"

"Because it sent him on a drunk, and he nearly killed his next fare in a fight over his charges, and was sent to the Island to cool off."

The night-hawk, as, in fact, the day hackman, too, is of independent and aggressive characteristics. He regards a passenger with scorn, and never misses an opportunity to express his contempt for him. There was a very curious case of this sort before a local police court some years ago. A gentleman, who had been beaten almost to a mummy, caused the arrest of an Erie Ferry hackman, his assailant. He had taken the latter's hack at midnight to drive to the Astor House. The man was drunk, and the passenger soon noticed that he was not going in the right direction. He poked his head out and said:

"You're driving wrong."

"Who is?" demanded the man.

"You are."

"Well, I'm bossing this funeral, ain't I?"

"But I want to go to the Astor House."

"You do? You don't want to go to no such place as that. The Fifth Avenue's your racket."

The fellow was too drunk to be argued with, and actually did



"ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE."

drive to the Fifth Avenue Hotel. There his fare refused to pay, and the harvey "took it out of his hide."

They tell of one night-hawk who was beaten at his own game. He carried a fare to a hotel and demanded about three times his just due.

The passenger refused to pay it, and the hackman seized his valise, which was on the box.

"All right," said the fare, "you're welcome to it. A fair exchange is no robbery."

And, jumping on the box, he lashed the horses into a gallop and carried off the hack.

He delivered it at the first police station he came to, and when the owner tried to recover it he was deprived of his license.

The valise and its contents, which were a few dirty collars, were not worth together two dollars.

Several deaths have occurred in the night-hacks. As if to balance the account, some births are also recorded. The most dramatic case of death in a New York hack occurred some years ago, and as the victim was a member of a prominent family, it was hushed up carefully.

The victim was a young broker who had been hit hard by Black Friday. Since that time he had gambled heavily. On the night of his death a night-hack picked him up at the door of a gaming-house.

As they passed through Union Square the driver was startled by the report of a pistol inside.

His fare had blown his brains out.

Night-hawk Neary had a funny experience of a violent sort once. He took a man and woman up at Hines' Central Park restaurant. They were a fine-looking pair; the woman strikingly beautiful and the man splendidly handsome. Both were elegantly dressed; they had been drinking. Before he had driven five blocks Neary became conscious that he had a lively load. In less than ten seconds every window in the hack was smashed. He pulled up and got down.

"I niver see such a fright in my born days," said Neary; "'twas currible. Both av 'em was noigh stripped, an' a batin' an' a clawin' wan another. Sure, the language they foired at aich other 'ud make a truck driver sick. The woman was gettin' the worst ov it, so I lays hands on the man an' pulls him out. So soon as I does this

the woman jumps at me. Betune the two I was a foine candidate for a hospital. I didn't get over that bating for a month."

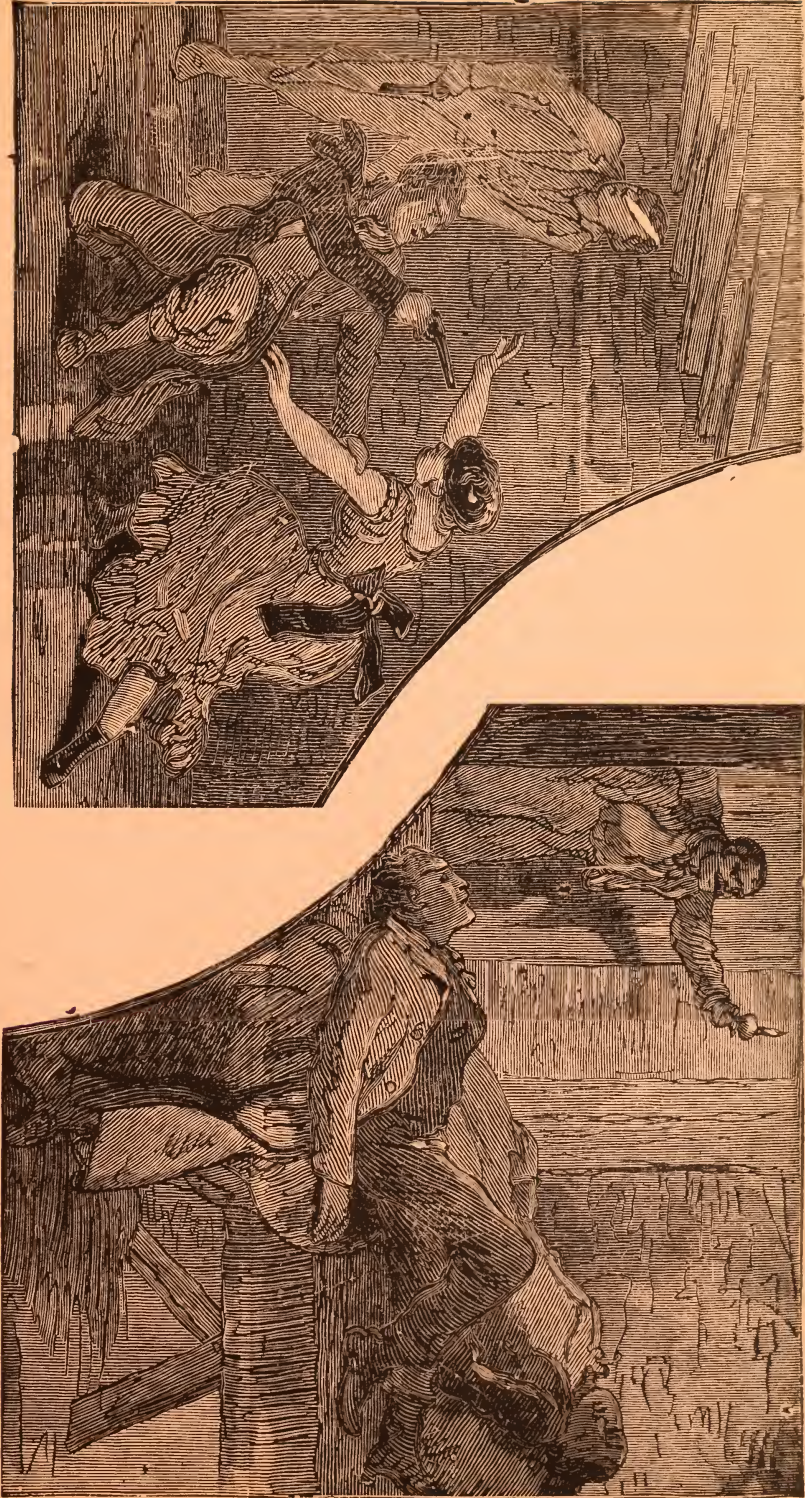
The romance writer would be hard pushed if he had not the hack to help him in his thrilling narrative. It is safe to say that the story of metropolitan life has yet to be written in which a hack or cab does not figure. But, in sober reality, the night-hawk, whose labors extend over the most romantic hours, meets little in life but grim reality. An occasional appointment, with a young man waiting inside for an eloping fair one, or a search by a jealous woman in pursuit of a false lover, are the most fanciful episodes he encounters.

One night-hawk tells how he drove up and down Fourteenth street one evening from 8 till 12 o'clock, with the wife of a stock broker inside watching, with a revolver in her hand, for her husband to come out of the back-door with an actress whom she suspected him of preferring to herself.

"But he didn't come that night, and it was lucky for him, for there was murder in that woman's soul."

Occasionally the night-hawk leagues with thieves, and assists in a midnight robbery. But this does not often happen. Robbers, when they need a hack, usually hire one, and constitute one of their number the driver.

The establishment of all-night lines on the street cars has cut heavily into the business of the night-hawk, and reduced the numbers in the trade at least fifty per cent. in the last five years. There will not, probably, be a further perceptible diminution, unless some regular system of public hacks, like the once proposed Metropolitan Cab Company, is established. Then the night-hawk's knell will have rung. Until then his field will be his own, and the extravagances and dissipations of this great city, of whose night side steady-going citizens know too little, will provide him with employment—precarious, indeed, but still enough to keep his eye in practice and his beak keen for prey.



THE BOWERY UNDER GROUND.
(From "Glimpses of Gotham.")

CHAPTER III.

BELLES OF THE KITCHEN.

I am not personally opposed to servant girls, and I believe that a good cook who does not have more than one cousin come to see her and eat up all the cold chicken and drink up all the bottled beer, is a jewel worth \$20 a week and her board. I believe also that the chambermaid who has the moral courage to avoid reading your letters and using your hair oil is an angel, worthy of substantial financial recognition. But the charges of pilfering brought against the guild are unfortunately too well founded in fact to be lightly dismissed. I do not care a rap about the wages. A good girl is worth more than a sloven, and any attempt to bind them down to a set price is absurd. There are as many grades in servant-galdom as there are in the trade of carpentering.

Before proceeding to a consideration of how some professional cooks and chambermaids work, let me digress a moment to state that I am not one of those who object to pretty "slaveys."

Take a tour through society and you will find that there is a strong prejudice against a comely face and lissome form when the owner is an applicant for an humble position in the household. This is particularly so in the establishments of young married people.

Ransack your memory and see if every newly married couple you know do not possess some gigantic negress, cross-eyed Scotch-woman, or equally unprepossessing specimen of femininity to hand around the coffee.

That reminds me of the very old joke about the grand-mother of the young husband, who said to the latter's wife abruptly, during a conversation on the responsibility of housekeeping :

"You will have a girl, of course?" She blushed and answered that she couldn't tell. Charley hoped it would be a boy.

How much more sensible than the average wife's plan of procedure was that of the Philadelphia wife who ransacked the intelligence offices of that moral city until she found a most charming handmaiden whom she duly installed in her home.

A much elder friend in the matrimonial line called to take lunch one day, and beheld this phenomenon demurely flitting about the table.

When she left the room the wife of experience seized the hand of the experimentalist, and taking her to one side, said in a horrified whisper :

"You have committed a grievous error."

"How so?"

"That girl!"

"Well, what of her?"

"She will never do."

"She is an admirable servant."

"I grant you that, but she is too pretty."

"Not at all. I got her on purpose. When George thinks of me, and then Abigail, he will consider that there is no place like home, and will begin to practice that domesticity which I hope to see become a habit."

Let us take the limited express and return from Philadelphia to a consideration of the subject of servant-girl stealings.

It is of two kinds—spasmodic and organized.

A girl sometimes steals simply because an opportunity is offered. The drama of Eve's temptation is acted all over again, the apple supplemented by a bit of lace, a diamond ear-ring, or a dozen spoons, richly chased.

If she takes them the girl becomes hotly chased, and is usually detected through the medium of the pawn-shop.

The professionals either act directly for themselves or are the agents of an outside gang. They frequently make burglaries the easiest jobs in the world by undoing catches, slipping bolts and locks, and the like.

No one can scream more realistically and piercingly than this kind of a servant girl when she discovers in the morning that the house has been robbed.

The co-operative plan is the latest, and I must confess, most ingenious of all the methods devised by these ladies of the swell-mob who go out to service. They copied it from honest but lazy girls, who found that it was possible to live nicely in the following manner. Say there are four of them.

They take a large room with two double beds; or two rooms.

Two of them enter their names at the intelligence offices, and in

good time obtain positions. While they are at work their board and lodging are naturally secured. Their wages goes into the common pool which supports the other two in idleness. When a month is up the situations will be reversed.

The idle ones, sometimes recommended to the very places of the others by the girls who are so sorry that they have to go to Ireland to see their mothers, who are dying, take the cars, and for a month the other twain have an opportunity to discover the pleasures of *dolce far niente*.

When the girls are not good and honest, it is easy to see how the unoccupied moments can be made profitable.

This very pretty plan of copartnership has, as I have said, been adopted by the thieves. Naturally their apartments are very swell, and are certainly most spacious, since they have to accommodate the articles run off by the members of the guild who are at work.

I was with an officer once in charge of a descent party upon one of these communistic homes, which were very rare then.

The sight that met the gaze when the doors to a suite of rooms in an east side apartment house was forced, staggered even the officers, and paralyzed me.

We were after some stolen property—a trivial amount—and we expected to find nothing more pretentious than the home of a brace of servant girls, out of work and pursued by justice, would naturally be.

What did we find?

Three or four young women—it was in the evening—dressed in silks and drinking genuine champagne handed about by certain gentlemen of unexceptionable dress and easy manner.

Or, rather, that was what they had been doing. The crashing in of the door had made a huddled tableau of the scene.

Before anything was done, before anybody spoke, I had a chance to gaze about and note that cheap and gaudy pictures, but still pictures, hung upon the walls, and that there was a piano in the parlor.

I should have liked to

“Have heard her play
On the pi-a-nay,”

but it was work and not play the posse had before them.

One young man tried to reach liberty by the fire-escape, but he found it already occupied by a policeman, who, singularly enough, had climbed up it to avoid a conflagration in China.

The discovery of the insignificant goods we were in quest of led to the seizure of about two hundred pawn tickets and trunks just filled with bed-clothing, dress-stuffs, linen goods, etc.

The damsels got long terms, and the inconsolable young men lost very charming companions.

Being a deep student of human nature, who never neglects, if he can help it, an opportunity to increase his stock of knowledge, I returned to the house some time after, and by ingratiating myself with the wife of the Dutchman who keeps the beer saloon in the basement, obtained some points bearing on the life led by these merry domestics, all of whom took turns at working out and looking as modest and pious as a Quaker tomb-stone.

I discovered that it was a perpetual round of pleasure, the actors changing as the exigencies of the trade required. Carriage rides to the park in fine weather were by no means infrequent, while a German musician from the Bowery who was hired by them to work the piano, frequently kept it banging away until it was time for the horse-car conductor on the next floor to get up and have his breakfast.

What a homily it all is! These brazen thieves live like pampered *cocottes*, while the hard-working, honest woman broils herself with the beefsteak over the stove, breaks her back over the washing-tub, and leads a life as laborious, in some instances, as that of the galley slave.

And now I come to another gang that my housekeeping readers will do well to steer clear of.

The blackmailers.

This is also a new science, and of course, will not be known to the police for some time to come. The *modus operandi* is simplicity itself, the one requirement of getting an intelligent educated girl in a rich family, being observed.

She says nothing.

But she uses eyes and ears.

If the master of the house has a mistress she is dead sure to ascertain it.



CONCERT SALOON BANDS.—(P. 36)

If a gentleman comes to lunch and the circumstance is never mentioned to "hubby" at dinner, she has a valuable item.

Letters are sometimes found on the floor. If short her brain retains the contents until she can get to her room; if long she boldly pockets the missive, engages in the agonized search for it with madame, copies it at her leisure, and then joyously finds it wherever she chooses, receiving thanks and a dollar bill with becoming modesty.

Sometimes the head of the house speaks of financial difficulties, and intimates to his wife over the desert that it is necessary for him to do something desperate. More cavalier for the silent, swift and capable servant.

In extreme cases she will make the future operations doubly sure by putting herself in her master's way, and coyly allowing him those liberties which she forces upon him.

At last all is ready. The mine is laid. It is only necessary, torch in one hand, while the other is extended, palm upwards, to approach the gentleman and demand his money or his reputation.

The servant girl rarely does this. The master mind behind her; her lover—some dissolute chap with rare intellectual qualities and a distaste for work, writes the first note, which is the primal bomb.

"My dear sir :

"I will begin by stating that I am a blackmailer and want money. I am aware that my operations are not looked kindly upon by the law, but desperation is my excuse. You have a mistress at No. — Blank street, and it is the extravagance of keeping two establishments which have induced you to falsify your accounts. Meet me at the Battery, Staten Island slip, this 10 P. M., with \$—— and I will keep quiet."

Or to madame :

"I know all. I have in my possession a copy of the letter in which Mr. — urges you to elope from your 'fool of a husband.' I must have money," etc., etc.

Of course there is a letter written to this eloping gentleman if he is a married man, and perhaps a fourth one to his wife, offering to expose her husband's perfidy with dates and names for a handsome consideration.

There are many other ways in which the servant girl can make matters lively and interesting in a family, but I think I have shown up enough villainy for one chapter.

When I get married and settled down, I shall insist upon Mrs Prowler investing in the prettiest, sweetest deaf and dumb girl she can find.

I will be an asylum to her, and as long as she won't hear what she couldn't speak of anyhow, matters will be serene.

CHAPTER IV.

CURIOUS METROPOLITAN INDUSTRIES.

That there are more ways than one of making a living everybody knows. Exactly how many there are, in a great city like New York it would puzzle anyone but an Asmodeus to say with exactness. I have come to the conclusion, after a searching investigation of the matter, that the number of queer businesses which furnish people with a subsistence in the metropolis, can only be defined by that algebraical sign which represents the unknown quantity, X. When I had jotted down the hundred and twenty-fifth my notebook gave out, and a few thousand more escaped my memory.

There are certainly none among the many more curious than that practiced by Conrad Stein.

Conrad is a professional sauer kraut cutter. His stock in trade consists of a machine constructed on the plan of a tobacco cutter—a long knife, fastened at one end to an upright by a loose pin, which works up and down on a block of wood and his muscle. Nature provided the last for him, and the knife cost him \$1.25 five years ago. He fears he will have to get a new one in 1900. His business does not, as may be perceived, call for a very extensive original capital.

Conrad, as far as can be ascertained, is one of five men who practice the craft of cutting cabbage for the stock German delicacy. They travel from house to house in the Teutonic quarter, soliciting trade, and in addition to this casual custom have regular customers whom they visit at stated periods. They charge ten cents a barrel for cutting cabbage, and in the brisk season, from August to May, average about two dollars a day at it.

Sauer kraut is essentially a winter dish. There are people who eat it "all the time," as the song on the subject says; but they have to cut their cabbage themselves. Sauer kraut cutting, as a trade, has flourished here some years now. Formerly the grocery store men used to manufacture it in vast quantities, and sell it at fifteen and twenty cents a quart. But now wise housewives buy their cabbage by the wholesale, hire Conrad Stein or one of his rivals to cut them up, and pack the shredded result in barrels with salt and water to ferment until it is ripe for consumption. This has brought the price of sauer kraut at the groceries down to ten cents a quart, and the grocers, of course, denounce the cabbage cutters as frauds.

The cat'-meat man represents another of the queer crafts of New York. Our down-town warehouses are all infested with rats, and one of the articles in their insurance policies, as well as their own interest, requires them to keep a sufficient number of cats to preserve their stocks from ruin by the rodents. Consequently there is a vast feline army billeted in the great mart.

Formerly the cats were fed by their owners, and on Sundays, when the stores were closed, they went hungry; but some years ago a clear-headed man, who happened to be out of work at the time, hit upon a bright idea.

He had heard how cats and dogs are provided with food in London by men who make that species of catering their business, and determined to try the plan in New York. He began with a basket, out of which he peddled portions of meat to the various warehouse cats at the rate of five cents a head per day. Where a number of cats were kept he fed them at a considerably reduced rate by the week.

He now uses a little pony cart, and sells over two hundred pounds of meat a day. Several rivals, profiting by his example, are now engaged in the business. In spite of this opposition, however, the pioneer cat's-meat man makes thirty-five or forty-five dollars a week over all expenses.

The cats all know him, and his progress through the streets where he makes his rounds in the early morning is attended by a perfect army of felines, all mewing and purring around him, scampering about his cart wheels and under his pony's legs.

Horse meat and coarse cuts of beef are the chief diet furnished by

the cat's-meat man to his boarders. On Friday, by way of variety, they get fish, presumably catfish. Cats are fond of fish, and Friday is said to be marked with a red letter in their calendar.

In London the cat and dog meat men feed their clients on the flesh of animals which have died natural deaths. Here, however, all the meat is bought in the markets, and if it is not exactly porterhouse steak, it is, at least, fit to eat.

If cats have their peripatetic caterers, so do their masters. There is in existence in this city a so-called "Catering Company," which contracts to furnish meals regularly at the offices or private houses of its customers. The food is cooked in an extensive kitchen, which serves as a sort of central office, and sent off to the boarders in wagons.

Two or three meals a day are served as desired, and the price varies, according to the number furnished, from seven dollars to ten dollars a week for a single person. The bill of fare is varied every day. It consists commonly of three dishes for breakfast, and of from five to seven, with soup and dessert, for dinner.

The company makes a specialty of vegetables, which it provides in vast variety, and without stint. It is kept warm, while in the wagons, by a patented process, and is served in a most palatable condition.

The chief business of the catering company, so far, has been with small families of adults who live in furnished lodgings, and with lazy bachelors similarly housed. The china, linen and service are excellent, and the *menu* choice enough to suit every appetite.

Less elaborate meals are served at a lower rate; but the company aims to secure a class of custom of the better sort, and does not care to develop the cheap trade. The business has long been a profitable one in London and Paris, and will probably prove lucrative here.

Another European custom which is proving profitable here is the out-of-door sale of refreshing beverages. In France, Spain, Italy and Germany one meets the lemonade or the sugar-water seller at every street corner. The brawny bull-fighter of Madrid or the stalwart workingman of Paris and Lyons tosses off the glass of lemonade or sweetened water as our laborer does his lager, or something stronger.

Five summers ago a man appeared on Park Row, retailing lemonade from a bucket at two, three and five cents a glass. The speculation proved a wonderful hit. To-day he has a big stand near the spot where



THE STREET MUSICIAN,—(P. 37.)

he first began business, and sells gallons of his refreshing liquid daily. He even compounds fancy drinks, such as lemonade with eggs, or beef extract, for roystering customers whose overnight potations had incapacitated their stomachs for the digestion of more solid food.

He has found hundreds of imitators, male and female, and a fruit or candy stand is hardly complete now without its lemonade-pail. The lemonade sellers have driven almost all the old time out-door soda water stands from the field.

They charge from one to ten cents, according to the size of glasses and the extra ingredients in the compound. Straight lemonade is nearly all profit. Half a dollar's worth of ice, lemons and sugar will make three gallons of it, containing about one hundred five-cent glasses. The reader can continue the calculation for himself.

On one of the hot days of last summer the Park Row lemonade bazaar dispensed twenty-one gallons. Its summer average was about fifteen gallons. Iced milk, too, made its appearance at many of the stands this year, and had an extensive sale.

There are other small traffickers who make good livings by peddling oysters, mutton and pork pies, sandwiches and waffles among the down town offices. There are also fruit and candy peddlers who have regular routes in the same sections, and sell considerable quantities of their wares which are commonly supposed to be the peculiar weaknesses of small boys and girls, to staid business men and dapper clerks.

Many of these itinerant tradesmen have been in the business for years and are quite well off. In several cases they are the descendants of those who were in the trade half a century ago. Old Ann Sullivan, a well-known candy and apple woman, has served some half a dozen big business houses daily for nearly twenty years. One of them moved almost a mile from its old site a year ago, but Ann appeared in the new place at her usual hour on the day of the reopening, and has not missed a day since.

The general public has little, if any, idea of the profits made in these petty trades. Of course there are no fortunes made at them, but they afford, in almost all cases, a fair living, and something to spare. People who have stands at busy corners, or who work over regular routes, invariably make a good profit. One peanut vender, at Third

avenue and Stuyvesant street, averages a sale of three bushels of that fruit a day. This merchant has a little steam engine, which he paid \$75 for, to turn the drum in which he roasts the nuts.

There are scores of stands which count on the regular sale of a bushel and a half of peanuts per diem. The Italians, who make the most money and spend the least, invariably have stockings well stuffed with savings.

There are old men and women who pick up many a dollar by the sale of cakes and sweatmeats of strange composition, at the doors of the school-houses, where they take their places as regular as the sun rises, except in vacation time. Then they probably lock themselves up and replenish their stocks for the next season, in the mystery and seclusion that alchemistic task requires.

Inquiry among the fruit and peanut venders resulted in the discovery that they average in summer a profit of from \$2.50 to \$10 a day, and a few run even higher. In winter they make very little, if anything. Most of them pay rent for their stands to the lessees of the houses in front of which they are located, and they keep open in cold weather solely to make money enough to defray this expense.

The gains by the venders who sell from barrows are more precarious. There is an ordinance against these barrows being stationary and obstructing the roadway, and the policemen keep them moving pretty constantly, so they do not enjoy the opportunity of attracting custom such as that the permanent stands command.

There are few things which cannot nowadays be purchased from street venders. Canes, candies, cigars and cologne, furnishing goods, cheap jewelry, toys, tinware, even boots and shoes—all have their outdoor marts. These articles are invariably of the cheapest make, and though the prices are preposterously low, they still admit a profit of from thirty to sixty per cent.

The itinerant peddlers of these wares, professionally known as "fakirs," are the worst off, and have a hard enough time of it, especially if they have to pay cash for their stock and risk the loss involved by a failure to sell. Well-known "fakirs" usually have credit with one or another of the several dealers who supply this class of traders, and can return such of their stock as remains unsold.

An active and successful "faker" will earn a couple of dollars a day with a popular article; but there are many more who are glad to pick



A VICTIM IN THE TOILS.

up enough to pay for a bed in a ten cent lodging-house and a meal at a tramps' restaurant. The regular "fakirs" are a very curious body. There are men among them who have peddled their way the length and breadth of the North American Continent, and some who have wandered into the tropics and South America.

"Jake the Fakir" spent three years under the Southern Cross selling rubber stamps and marking plates. Drink is commonly the "fakir's" bane, and whether he earns much or little it all goes the same road. They are a gregarious folk, and if you find one in any of the cheap dormitories down town, which are about the only houses they know, you are tolerably certain to discover others in the same place. Like the thieves, they have a slang *patois*, which, if it is not particularly melodious, is at least expressive and picturesque.

The saw-filers and knife-grinders form a numerous body. Their labors now, however, are chiefly in demand for private houses. A peculiarity with them is that in summer, when business is dull here in consequence of the absence of people from town, they take long professional trips into the country.

Itinerant tinkers, glaziers and umbrella and clock menders find most of their employment in the country now, too. So do the sweeps. There are still half a dozen professional chimney sweeps in New York. But the new styles of chimney building and the invention of patent sweepers have trenched on their field until it has become a very limited one, indeed. The old-fashioned houses in the rural districts are their best hold now, and they tramp from county to county pretty much all the year round. From \$3 to \$10 is the price paid for a job of chimney sweeping.

In return, the country sends us, at least, one notable character in our queer businesses. That is the frog-catcher. The artists are usually either Frenchmen or negroes, and they come in from Jersey, Long Island and Westchester laden with frogs and water-cresses, the collection of which latter delicacy seems to be a sort of side business with them. They also gather medicinal herbs, which they retail among their compatriots and to queer drug stores in the proletarian districts.

Quite a trade has sprung up, in the last couple of years, in wooden shoes, or sabots, and a little colony of Frenchmen is kept busy in a shop in South Fifth avenue supplying it. The shoes are shaped out of blocks of ash or whitewood, and hollowed out with fire. They cost

from one to two and a half dollars a pair, and will last as long as tin patches can be put on them.

They seem to be worn by workmen, members of the French colony in this city, and farmers and farm laborers out of town. A grocery store in Greene, near Houston street, is the chief retail establishment. The sabots are asserted to be quite as light as the cheap horse-leather brogans, and much drier and more comfortable to the feet, as well as more durable.

Public letter-writers are quite common in our foreign quarters. There are both French and Germans in the business. They write letters for anyone who desires it, and furnish translations of them either in English, German or French; some even including Italian and Spanish. The usual fee is 25 cents, and they say they are generally kept busy enough.

The headquarters of a public letter-writer is usually one of the small general shops where everything from shoe-strings to dragon kites is sold, and they advertise themselves by elaborately engrossed pen-and-ink signs in the windows.

The early stroller in the foreign quarters will meet queer old women and decrepid men, who flit in and out of the houses in the dark hours before dawn, like birds of ill omen or people who have forgotten where they live.

These are professors of perhaps the oddest of all our odd businesses. They are the professional callers. Their duty is to wake people up who have to go to work at exceptionally early hours. For a few cents, at most a dime a week from each client, these poor creatures perform their task, turning night into day, till at last a hand, scarcely more grisly than their own, knocks at their own door and summons them, not to labor, but to rest.

There are musicians, artists, singers and the like who make a regular business of performing in bar-rooms, relying on the contributions of the loungers for pay. The artists are either those who draw soap pictures on windows or mirrors or adepts at coarse caricatures. Bohemians and vagabonds who for a dime and a drink dash off a crude but frequently quite striking pencil-sketch of whoever chooses to pay him.

A one-eyed young man of Hebrew extraction is the most skillful of

these artists. He was at one time employed on an illustrated paper, and exhibited considerable promise, but drink and a perverse spirit secured his discharge, and he drifted into this method of gaining a minimum of living and a maximum of liquor. He calls a dollar and a drink a good day's work, and rarely makes the first.

The musicians are usually of a somewhat better class, morally. They include performers on the zither and violin. The former instrument seems to be the favorite now. The bar-room musicians begin their rounds at nine o'clock in the evening and end up in late bar-rooms where, out of the beery good nature of the patrons, they reap their richest harvests.

Most of them drink little, support families out of their earnings, which at the best of times do not average more than one dollar and fifty cents a day, and understand very little music. There is one troupe of very pretty young girls who give bar-room performances in concert on the harp, violin and cello, and do very well indeed—financially.

Bar-room singers and jugglers are quite common, and there is one young fellow who goes from one saloon to another exhibiting feats of contortion. Another plays on the mouth organ, giving imitations of various instruments and rendering difficult airs with astonishing truth and beauty. Yet this phenomenon is so nearly an idiot that he has to have a little brother with him to keep him out of harm's way.

Up to a few months ago a dapper little Italian used to haunt certain beer gardens with a diminutive performing goat, decked out with ribbons, spangles and long jingling bells, which did strange feats as prettily as poor Esmeralda's favorite. But the goat died, and its master has gone out of the business.

Street jugglers turn up every now and then, and do card tricks and other feats of prestidigitation on the sidewalk, but they always collect big crowds, and the policemen constantly disturb them.

Less obnoxious to the official eye is the man who tells fortunes through the medium of birds. He has a cage, in which are a couple of poor, bony little canaries, and a tray full of envelopes. When a customer expresses a desire to have his or her fortune told, the wizard spreads the envelopes out before the cage, and one of the canaries instantly pecks out a missive. This contains some such commonplace announcement as "good fortune" or "bad luck." Professor Logriena,

the well-known bird trainer and prestidigitator, denounces this business as a burning shame. The birds, he says, are kept on the verge of starvation, and a few rape seed are put in each envelope. Of course the little feathered martyrs peck at it in the hope of obtaining food.

Punch and Judy shows are now becoming quite familiar features in our streets. So are peep-shows of various sorts, principally views of strange lands and historic scenes. One enterprising showman got up a series illustrating the Hull murder. An Italian now exhibits a very fair marionette theatre on the up-town streets every day. In the intervals, when he is not rusticating on the Island, Brown, the famous steamboat man, enlivens the streets with his characteristic whistling performances.

Sandwich men are getting to be as common in the streets of New York as they used to be in London. Inserted between two big placards setting forth the merits of some cheap eating house, or advertising bargains in boots or dumb-bells, they creep up and down in a doleful procession, like so many colossal snails, to the detriment of the ribs of the passers-by. The oddest of the sandwich men are those employed by a French house painter. They travel about, bearing tin signs, on which are inscribed a sensational story of the murder of a relative in Paris and a demand for justice, ending, however, with the name and address of the painter, and an invitation to the reader to have his house painted in the best style. Sandwich men earn fifty to seventy-five cents a day. Some few get a dollar, but they are aristocrats in the profession and are exceptions to the rule. There must be some charm or fantastic attraction, like that the stage is said to exercise, in the business, for there are men in it who have stuck to it for several years.

Among other queer businesses must be mentioned that of a party in Twenty-third street, who practices the calling of moth destroyer. By virtue of a compound known only to himself he annihilates those little foes to good clothes and fine furs. He practices both at home and abroad. In contradistinction to him is the artist, who, on Broadway, follows the calling of repairer of destroyed china. The restoration of valuable damaged books is another curious business. It is carried on to great perfection in England and France. Here there are a few people in the trade, or rather art, and they always have their hands full. The work is very profitable indeed, as is also that of expanding books by the insertion of valuable or curious engravings. Some biblio-



SHOT AND KILLED BY AN ENRAGED HUSBAND.

maniacs have had books of one volume swelled to thirty, or even more, by the addition of pictures illustrating the text. Another business which has proved a lucrative one is that of selling magical instruments of the cheaper sort, and instructing the buyers, who are principally boys and youths, in their use. One tradesman in this line on the Bowery is never idle.

The bouquet business has undergone a great change within the last couple of years. Formerly the venders used to buy the flowers themselves and make them into bunches. Some, who have capital, do so to-day. But the great majority of them are only peddlers for flower-dealers, who make the bouquets by wholesale and employ anyone whom they can trust to hawk them. They allow the vender a cent on every five cent bouquet sold and three cents on every ten cent one. Certain east side streets are fairly lined with these floral speculators' shops.

It would require a whole book to review the army of ragpickers, cigar-stump collectors, organ grinders, itinerant cobblers, clothes menders and cutters (for there are men who go from house to house cutting the cloth which thrifty housewives make into clothing for their numerous families) and the like, all of whom help to swell the tide of life in the metropolis and gain a livelihood, commonly meagre enough, by trades which people hardly know exist.

There is one figure among the lot, however, which calls for more extended comment. It is that of the accommodating gentleman who has come to be known as the "time peddler." Not that he peddles clocks, but that he knows the value of time, and don't object to consuming some of it for the benefit of his customers.

There are quite a number of time peddlers in New York, and they are most useful members of the community. They are all Hebrews, and sell everything on the installment plan. If your wife wants a silk dress she can obtain the material from the time peddler, paying a few dollars down and the rest in stated installments. Hats, shoes, underclothing, linen, everything a woman needs, in short, are supplied by him. He will contract to furnish the husband as well as the wife, too, even to the extent of an overcoat or a suit of clothes. In this case the customer is sent to some tailor, who measures and supplies him with the required garments, sending the bill to the peddler. The latter pays it, and presents his bill to the customer, with an addition of from twenty-five to

fifty per cent for the accommodation. Nothing comes amiss to the time peddler, from a paper of pins to a piano. He will supply them all, but at nearly if not quite double the price one would have to pay if the transaction had been conducted on a cash basis.

CHAPTER V.

THE MOONLIGHT PICNIC.

Sketchley and I have just been promoting the success of the eleventh annual moonlight picnic of the Blush Rose Social Club—an influential political society organization of the Sixth Ward—at Schweitzerkase's Grove, and if my physical condition is a sign we had a high old time of it. It took me an hour to deliberate this morning on whether I should tie a sheet around my head or wear the ash barrel out to get my usual ante prandial soda and lemon, and I compromised by sending Mary Ellen for it in a tin pail. If I am any judge of black eyes of the artificial order Mary Ellen had been to a moonlight picnic, too. She was bracing up on Florida water out of young Bluffy's bottle in the hall cupboard when I called her. She said it was to "rejuice the inflammation, sor." If the effect in question is at all like that which the process of producing it had on the contents of Bluffy's perfume flask there won't be any inflammation at all left.

The moonlight picnic, as you may therefore infer if you don't know it already, is an institution of the liveliest description.

You always go to it in a barge with a bar on board and a little, asthmatic steamer hauling it along at the end of a hawser, for all the world like a small boy lugging a liberal thirty cents' worth of midsummer dog to the pound. The bar and the band are the best bowers of the moonlight picnic management. The former is situated on the lower and the latter on the upper deck, for the barges are two stories high. This division is necessary, for no bottles were ever blown that could stand a half hour's serenade by an excursion band. The notes come flying out of the tubes like shrapnel and grape from a field battery. The instruments are generally brass, but they ought to be boiler iron for the strain they have to stand. Some day, when the explosion of a French horn or the bursting of a trombone strews the deck with man-

gled dead and dying, the public will awake to a tardy realization of this necessary reform.

There was a Saxe horn at the Blush Rose picnic, for instance, that I will back against the boiler of any excursion steamer in New York harbor for condensed destructiveness, and I'll take my affidavit that nothing but the fact that the performer was too drunk to do his instrument justice prevented what the *Herald* would call "Another Holocaust."

Still the band makes music enough along with the noise to dance by, providing one is not too particular, and the picnickers take advantage of it. They are not fools enough to kick at the quality as long as there is quantity enough to keep their heels and toes busy more agreeably.

In our case we began within ten minutes after we had left the dock, and would no doubt have commenced sooner only the committee of arrangements were afraid of being held responsible for the destruction of window glass in the city, and waited till we got out of range.

The dance on an excursion barge opens with much ceremony.

The gentlemen bow, the ladies curtsey as they accept an invitation or don't, and everything is as formal almost as it would be in a ball-room ashore; but it don't last. It is fun, not etiquette, the moonlight picknicker is after, and if he don't get it it isn't his fault.

Within an hour the girls have their wraps off and the men are in their shirt sleeves.

At the end of another you no longer invite your partner, but snatch the first lady you fancy from her seat and whirl her off into the gay and melting round.

The third hour brings with it the privilege of exchanging partners on the floor, if they will let you, and doing pretty much whatever you please, from dancing in your bare feet to tripping the fat girl with the green hat up, and then telling her that there has been a big fall in lard. This style of witicism is always very much relished at a moonlight picnic by everybody but the person it is applied to—that is, and by the time you get off a few specimens you will be gratified to hear the girls you haven't been guying saying to one another:

"He's a real funny fellow, isn't he? And so good natured."

All around the railing of the upper deck flirting parties hem the dancers in.

The flirtations of the moonlight excursion are, like its dancing and its music, more vigorous than æsthetic. Sketchley, who has been quite melancholy since Jessica started for Europe, brightened up to the extent of getting gone on a pert little beauty with copper-tinted hair and eyes as black as coal and as brilliant as electric lights.

"She looks so refined in this coarse crowd," he said. "By George! I've a notion to make up to her."

It took him half an hour to arrive at this notion, and when he went to fulfill it he found Black Eyes on the flirtation bench, with her panting throat bare and a young fellow with cropped head and a long red neck fanning her with his hat.

As our friend sidled up the object of his adoration said to her companion:

"Jimmy!"

"Kitty!"

"Oo's 'ittle dam fool is 'oo?"

"Why, 'oors, Dod dam!"

Sketchley didn't wait for them to finish kissing.

"It's too infernal hot to kiss anyhow," he said. "For the Lord's sake, don't bother me."

And he commenced caricaturing the young man with the red neck, stabbing the paper as if his pencil had been a knife.

When you are not flirting or dancing you are at the bar, renewing your backbone with beer and hard boiled eggs against the next turn. This is as much a sacred duty on your part toward the committee as it is to yourself. The eggs and beer were brought on board to be consumed, and they have got to be before you go home, so you might as well commence as soon as you can.

Sometimes the excursion has no definite destination, but just goes sailing around, dancing, eating and drinking till there is nothing more on board the barge to sell and the farmers on shore have organized a vigilance committee and are looking for boats.

When, as in our case, it goes to some grove it gets there about the time that the excursionists are too exhausted to dance any more, so they pair off and go ashore to brace up.

The crew of the tug utilize this opportunity to board the barge and get drunk, and they have finished thrashing the bartenders and gone off without settling, when the excursionists come trooping back



ON THE BRINK OF DEATH.

(FROM THE "POLICE GAZETTE ANNUAL.")



squabbling or cracking jokes, and the bartenders put brown paper on their wounds and get ready to make the new arrivals pay the bill the tug folks didn't.

The band, meantime, has been reviving its wind with a keg of beer, and is as ready for action as it ever was. There is something marvelous in the amount of muscular energy a sheet iron band will develop over a single keg of beer. It reminds one of the reply of the Irishman who, when asked whether he played the violin by note or by ear, answered :

"By main stringth, be Jabers !"

It takes longer to get started on the return trip than the voyage out, principally because the crew of the tug are all sleeping their drunk off, and the captain has to go around with a locust club and argue with them ; but however great the delay may be there are sure to be some people left behind.

In our case it was Black Eyes and Red Neck, and they came down the wharf just as we drifted out into the stream.

"Good bye !" shouts somebody.

"Tra-la-la !" yells another.

"Why don't you swim off?" calls a third.

This suggestion evidently suits Black Eyes to a dot. Before the words are spoken almost she is in the water, and in a couple of minutes more stands with her wet bunting dress clinging to her shapely form on the barge's deck, while Red Neck from the end of the wharf fires words which rival the efforts of the band at his departing love.

"Ain't I the daisy just?" she says to Sketchley, with his pencil busy. "Mind you give me a square deal now, or I'll get Jim to slug you as soon as he tramps it back to town. He's a regular goat; he hates the water so."

And she shakes the spray from her tumbled hair, which glows like spun gold in the lamplight, raining a shower of liquid diamonds on all about, while her eyes flash the brightest and the color flushes her cheeks under the soft skin like the deep blush on a ripe peach.

The boat takes its time towing us back, but nobody bothers about it. We sit with our heels on the railing now and drink beer without counting the glasses. A one-eyed gentleman from the Fourth Ward developed a comic talent and sings songs which nobody listens to, accompanied by hideous facial contortions suppositiously expressive of

intense and varied emotions. When he finishes the girls all applaud wildly and laugh till they cry. Then some one suggests a can-can, and the proposition is received with rapture. The band brisks up and the moon, peeping under the roof of the open deck as if it was ashamed to look, sees a picnic version of the dance of the mabille. We have more beer and more singing. A young lady in scarlet velvet does a clog; she has just learned preparatory to blazing on the public from the variety stage. A couple of rollicking would-be variety actors, having provided themselves with masquerading garments, don them, and give the company a sample of their talent. This excites a spirit of emulation in other young ladies, and they exhibit various kindred acquirements. We are so interested that we do not notice that the barge has ceased to progress until some one sees our tug steaming swiftly down the river.

"The line parted," says a committee man, coolly, "and they hadn't no other one, so they went on to New York."

"And we've got to lay here all night?"

"It looks so."

"But what the devil are we to do?"

"Well, I don't see much. The beer's all out, but there's twenty dozen of champagne yet, and I s'pose you can manage to worry along on that till morning."

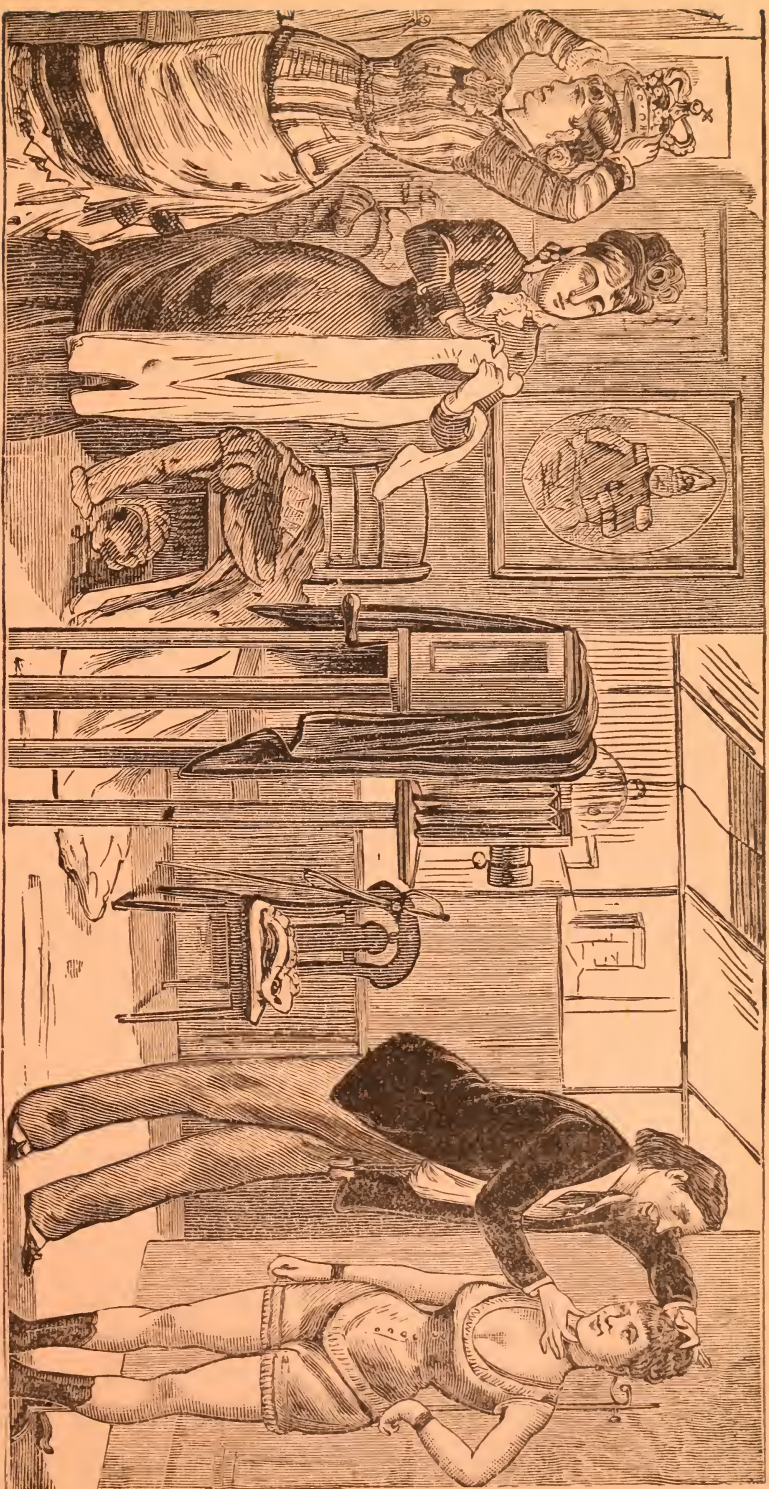
Which may explain why my hat wouldn't fit this morning, for by the time we took ambulances to our various homes there wasn't enough of anything but water left on the *E Pluribus Unum* to moisten the bottom of an Italian's tomato can.

The Blush Rose Moonlight Picnic was therefore an eminent success.

CHAPTER VI.

PHOTOGRAPHIC BEAUTIES.

When I hadn't the least idea of ever becoming an artist with the pen at all I remember my dear mother once yanking me out of bed by the ear early on a roasting hot morning, scouring me with soap and a hair brush till I might have been taken for a boiled lobster—if the other party had been drunk enough—slamming me into a brand new



A BOWERY PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY.—(P. 44.)

suit of clothes, with a shirt that was starched till I felt as if I was in my coffin, and a collar that drew blood every time my tender hide touched its edge, and then hauling me to a photographic gallery to have a picture taken for my uncle in China, from whom I had expectations.

In those days when you wanted to have your picture taken you went or were taken and had it taken by a man who was too glad of a job to put on any airs and that was the end of it.

But we don't do it that way nowadays—not in New York, at least.

In the first place, you drop into one of our photographers somewhere around Union Square, probably, as mine is, to book yourself for a sitting.

You did it in the swell reception room, with screens, tapestry, trophies of old arms and pictures, and you do it through the medium of a most fascinating young female in the gayest of summer toilets, who presides behind an elaborate walnut desk, over an immense register of names, and asks in a business tone, tempered by natural sweetness, unless you happen to be one of her own sex:

"Name, please?"

"Mr. O. Rounder."

It goes down in a neat little hand, and there is a brief calculation.

"You stand number ninety-nine, Mr. Rounder."

"And when do I come in?"

More calculation, assisted by rubbing of penholder.

"Let me see. Twenty-eight is down for this afternoon. I guess it will be at 1 o'clock day after to-morrow."

"What can I do for you, madame?"

You give place to a swell dowager, who makes number one hundred and a deal of fuss about being so high up, too, and amuse yourself by a look about you. There are plenty of things to look at, but those that chiefly interest you are the pictures of the people who have had the bulge on you in a photographic way. You find them in elaborate frames on the walls and in plethoric albums on the table. They fill obese portfolios and fat fancy boxes. And there are a couple of young persons in big white aprons gumming them to cards in one corner with paste which smells aristocratically of the perfume.

There are any number of people beside yourself making the same use of their eyes. Some have come on the same errand as yourself, others are waiting for their turn to take advantage of previous appointments. The crowd is a shifting one, what with departures and arrivals.

You notice several things about it at once.

The chief is, that it is composed of the fair sex, with only a sprinkling of young men, who seem to have had appointments with the ladies they are talking to.

The second is, that if dress goes for anything it is the lumtummet of upper-crustness personified.

But most of all that strikes you is the power of criticism the ladies develop. What an Irishman would call their knowledgability in art is simply immense.

And unrestricted by the conventionality of the drawing room it is equally piquant.

"Upon my word, dear, here is Florry Honiton, with her neck bare, too!"

"And those arms!"

"I beg pardon!"

"Arms, I said."

"Thanks! I was speculating as to what they were. I don't wonder she wears trains if they match."

"They're not nearly as bad as Hortense Vandervere's, and here she is in a page's suit."

"It's anything but a suit for her."

"The only approach to a match about it are her—"

A buzzing group quite fills a little alcove at one end of the room. It is a picture in the alcove, an immense photograph, retouched with charcoal, a Venus, redolent of the lush life of the crooked, stretched on a bank of daisies.

"And they say she was the mistress of a king."

"Yes. The King of Westphalia."

"I might have guessed it. Ham is so fattening."

You hear a great deal more of this cast off-light of love of a pretty sovereign, and you hear no good of her, of course. But there are two points you can discount at the start.

One is that when you hear her blackguarded for permitting young

Scattercash of the Union to squander his hundred thousand a year on her and even cut into the future hundreds of thousands there isn't one of the ladies whose virtue this unprincipled proceeding shocks who wouldn't change places with her and pay for her own wedding ring, too.

The other, that not one of her fair assassins would miss a night when she sings, not if it cost her every other opera of the season.

"Ze laugh is viz ze vinner, though," the Grasshopper, as Bohemia had christened her, once said over her macaroni at Morettis, where she overheard herself being torn to pieces by a couple of neighbors. "How dull zis life would be if one was always speak vell of, and beside, *mon ami*, ze pictures sell like vat you call ze hot cakes. Zere is not one of zose ladies who does not buy herself one, she hate me so."

Which proves that the Grasshopper's philosophy is sounder than her morality, and that there's more good in a bad name than people generally look for.

A dashing blonde, in a dazzlingly new costume from feathers to French boots, sweeps up to the counter. Even if you did not recognize the original of the familiar face which stares at you in every album and out of every shop window, that Bohemian case of address would tell you that it was learned nowhere but behind the footlights. An aristocratically scorbutic young man, with the fuzz on his cheeks almost enough developed to be dyed into visibility, takes off his hat to her with a flourish, and then turns very red and whispers apologetically to the lady with him:

"It's Somer—Miss Somerville, I mean; met her—on—tother night at the opera, you know. Dooched pleasant gyurl for an actress. Pictures sell immensely, and she gets twenty dollars on every thousand."

"How are the sales going?" asks the subject of this lucid explanation.

"Three thousand, three hun—"

"O bother the odd numbers. They won't run away 'till next time."

There is a little whispered confab, the scratching of a pen in a receipt book, and the blonde sucks an inky finger while the fascinating young female counts some bills over for the fourth time, and takes as long as she can at it. Somerville don't count them at all. When she

does get them, "I'm afraid another handling wouldn't leave anything but rags," she says as she slips them into her glove.

The fascinating young female avenges the sarcasm by giving one of the girls in the corner a blowing up for mounting a picture the hundredth part of an inch too low, and the departed blonde goes through the mill and comes out pretty nearly as badly used up as the Grasshopper. In fact, her critics know less good of her. She hasn't any royal names on her visiting list. So the same tongues which started the Westphalian monarch's squeezed orange for a shameless adventuress take their little dig at the other because she is "common." The only way to do things, after all, is not to do them by halves.

A fresh arrival dams the stream of gossip and turns the current in another channel. It is a superb brunette, who is followed by a liveried man with a valise. She passes through the room and vanishes into another, followed by the henchman.

"Mrs. Munnybagg, upon my word!"

"Of course, I thought you knew it."

"She's being photoed in costume."

"Certainly, and being paid for it, too."

"I don't see what there is about her to be worth a price for posing."

"They say she was the model for Chrisseller's Venus."

"I always thought he had an immense imagination, and now I know it."

The flunkey comes out without the valise. Some one observes sarcastically that old Munnybagg keeps his wife so short that she has to pose to a photographer to get money enough to pay her valet.

"She would be a deal better off if they were not married. They say he's as liberal as a prince away from home."

"He has need to be. It's his only recommendation."

The entrance of a dapper old gentleman with very shaky legs cuts the thread of scandal again. He has with him a very young lady, with bleached hair and a saucy face and sharp, black eyes, which take the room in defiantly. Her escort whispers something which makes her laugh, rather louder than is absolutely necessary. He nods familiarly to the register lady, and says:

"We are on time, you see."

"To the minute, Mr. Munnybagg."



NIGHT AND MORNING.

(From "New York by Day and Night.")

"Now then, my pet."

They go through the back door, and the crowd breaks out again.

"Talk of the, you know whom, eh?"

"The old reprobate!"

"The idea of that, Amaranth! A shameless chit from a second rate burlesque troupe."

"But if Mrs. M. should only see them!"

In point of fact, if Mrs. M. stands for Mrs. Munnybagg, she has; for the door flies open, and that lady, in an entrancing deshabelle, with a lace shawl thrown over her head only half veiling a liberal bust, appears.

"What is this, Miss Blank?" she calls sharply, with the nut-cracker face grinning over her shoulder like a chimpanzee's.

"What, Mrs. Munnybagg?" queries Miss Blank, scarcely looking up from her ledger. It is her way of crushing her audacious sex to never take any interest in them.

"What is Mr. Munnybagg doing with this—this—this—"

"They came by appointment, madam."

"And what the deuce is Mrs. Munnybagg doing here if it comes to that?"

"She came by appointment, too, Mr. Munnybagg."

This with a gracious smile that makes Mrs. M. turn crimson with fury and almost foam at the mouth.

"There, by Jove! Madam, we're even."

The door closes, and the rest of the warfare of the Munnybaggs and the anathemas only reach us in a vague murmur.

The circumstances that bring the wife and the mistress of this senile libertine upon the same pictorial level are curious ones.

Or, rather, they were until the fashion had become too common to be curious any more.

There was a time when the posing for photographs in costume was a special privilege of the actress, or at most the courtesan after a masked ball or a spree. But it wasn't long before some society beauty got it into her head that she'd look quite as well in tights and a plumed hat as Miss So-and-so, of the Grand Calcium, and she tried it. The ice being thus cracked it was soon completely broken. Half of the fancy photographs exposed for sale to-day, with all the picturesque make-up

of a footlight queen, are those of people who know no more of the stage than one learns from the front of the house.

In fact, some of the very fanciest are of this sort, and what is more, the originals are more exacting on the score of their percentage than any professional *poseuse*.

"That lady," observed my friend Comodion one day, pointing to a picture in my hand, "figures her interest down to the fraction of a cent, and fights like a wildcat for the odd half if there is one. Yet she is the wife of a man worth \$50,000 a year and lives in a palace on the avenue. That little girl there is another avenue belle, but she shines at the south end. She's on the ballet at Niblo's, and is as poor as the poorest church mouse ever dared to be and not starve. Yet I've never had a dispute with her about her percentages. It isn't in her. She's too poor to be mean and for me to be mean with her either."

The percentages paid on photographs to the originals are from \$15 to \$50 a thousand. Some of the highest are paid to the wife of a Brooklyn clergyman, who has posed over two hundred times, and never once in the habiliments of her own sex—frequently in none of any gender. In fact, until the Grasshopper concluded to give life to the *role* she was the only photographic aphrodite in New York, except, of course, those shameful pictures of whom she cannot speak without a shudder. Fancy this woman, in the swell church her husband presides over, listening to the moral lessons with due discreet attention, while her pictured self, purchased for so many dimes with a share to herself, serves to fire the passions of some *blase* debauchee, and forms one of the vile decorations of a bagnio parlor.

But all the *poseuses* don't rely on the photographer and the open market alone for the disposal of their counterfeited charms. I dropped to a neat little dodge in the course of a call the other day. It was a call on a couple of young ladies at a "bang-up" architectural ornament of Reservoir Park. I noticed on the table some photographs of my hostesses in a most charming though unconventional costume, and remarked: "Private theatricals, eh?"

"Oh, no! We were at Albumen's the other day, and he got us to pose in a couple of costumes he had there. We were getting up a benefit subscription for the Hugmegug Asylum for Inebriates' Orphans, so we had a lot printed and are selling them for the good of the subscription box."

Of course, I couldn't help adding my mite to the store hidden in the pretty paper-mache and blue satin box on the centre table. I forgot my cane, and walked back a block to get it. My hostesses were talking when I passed the parlor doors.

"Only two dollars! The stingy fellow! I made sure it would be enough for that ribbon, but you never can depend on these men about town."

CHAPTER VII.

METROPOLITAN MOONSHINERS.

The majority of our citizens—that solid, respectable class who have great respect for the majesty of the law—are under the impression the business of "moonshining" or distilling spirituous liquors illicitly is confined to the mountain fastnesses of Georgia.

Such is not the case, however, not by the largest majority that that particular State ever gave for the democratic ticket, and the way the Georgia "crackers" can whoop up votes is something remarkable.

Right in New York city the work of defrauding the United States Government by utterly ignoring the existence of such an institution as the Revenue Department while making whisky is carried on to a considerable extent. I cannot say how many stills there are in operation, because I have possessed no means of getting at the facts, but both your artist and myself can swear to the existence of one. We have been there, have drunken of the whisky and can safely pronounce it good.

There is no desire on our part to aid and abet individuals in their attempts to swindle the United States Government, but we were after the romantic and picturesque only, and drank the liquor merely because it was good to drink. I, for one, shall not let my conscience trouble me to any appreciable degree.

Now for the "still." It is at the upper end of the island, where New York revels in rocks, ravines, narrow lanes, bits of wooded land, and then again vast stretches of meadow. The house is back off the main road and is an honest, licensed beer saloon, with its short counter, swathed keg, its sanded floor and one or two tables. It was about

fifteen minutes past eleven o'clock on a stormy evening that our representatives walked up the muddy steps of a house, a gleam of light from the interior showing that we were not too late, opened the door and stalked in.

The sole occupant was a very pretty German girl, I should say she was nineteen years old, who was counting the money from the till by means of a candle. She looked at us hurriedly, and with anything but pleasure in the glance. Then she reached up to where a bell-cord dangled and pulled it vigorously. This done, she turned and said :

"What do you wish? There is no more beer, we are about to close."

As she spoke she came around in front of the bar and locked the door. I noticed then what a splendidly constructed animal she was.

We were prisoners to a dead certainty.

"We want to see your father," I answered.

"And what do you want with her father?" came in a growling tone from some one back of me. I was undeniably startled, and upon turning was far from being reassured by discovering a powerful, tall man, with black beard and hair, who wore a genuine buccaneer's appearance generally.

We both stood up, but before I had time to explain our position it was rendered still more interesting by the arrival upon the scene of the wife and mother, a true copy of Frochard in "The Two Orphans," and a couple of brawny, lounging lads with sleeves rolled back over muscle-knotted arms.

The storm in the meantime had risen to the dignity of a tornado, shaking the house till the windows and doors rattled like the teeth of a shivering tramp. It was a curious tableau we formed. The red-shirted father forming with the formidable looking mother and the anything but mild-mannered boys a semi-circle of menacing background, while the girl held the flaring candle aloft, displaying as she did so an arm of faultless shape.

At last I produced the letter I had obtained from an old friend of the distillers'. It stated that our visit was strictly an honorable one, that we were merely after the picturesque, and that he might with the utmost safety allow us to inspect the secrets of his "still."

When the bear had read this through and passed it to his wife, he growled out a welcome, and shook us both by the hand, saying :



"That's all right. I didn't know at first but what it was the government itself making so late a call. We were just getting to work when you came. But what do you say to a little dishonest whiskey first?"

We nodded concurrence in the idea, and a stone bottle with glasses was produced. The pretty daughter waited upon us, all smiles and affability now. After the drink we all went into the distillery. Being able to drink whiskey is one thing, and understanding how it is made is another. I am quite sure my readers do not desire any scientific dissertation on the subject in this sketch.

The "still" is copper or brass, and connects with the worm, which is attached to some other mysterious contrivance. It was all there to be seen, and after they had fixed the "mash" and attended to a few details about valves and stop-cocks, the apartment was left in charge of one of the men, and we returned to the front room to eat some sausages which Frochard had been cooking and upon which she staked her reputation. I liked the sausages very well; they seemed to suit the occasion, to fall in with the idea of smuggling, and all that. The "Pirates of Penzance" were nowhere in wickedness to us then.

"Mina, tell the gentlemen how you threw the gauger and saved the 'still' that night."

"You know I never tell that story," said the handsome woman, with a bit of red burning through the brown of her cheek, "and you shouldn't ask me."

"Then I'll tell it," said a good-looking young man in the group, as he knocked the ashes from his pipe, "for I was the gauger, and she, God willing, is soon to be the gauger's wife." This gentleman had made his appearance with the sausages.

Mina made an effort to escape, but her mother barred the way. So she went behind the bar and a German newspaper.

"It was about a year ago," the young man began. "I was in the employ of the government simply as a gauger, at so much a day, but was sometimes detailed on special duty like hunting out illicit stills. I broke two up in East New York and then heard of this one. Not being sure of my game I thought I would prospect first. I could at least destroy the apparatus, if any were discovered, and get the authority afterwards."

"It happened that I came in here when Mina was all alone. The

old gentleman, his wife, and the boys, suspecting nothing, had gone to a dance over in Guttenberg."

"Nein! nein!" came from the old lady, "eet vos a funeral."

"Well, they were away, having some kind of a time, and the girl was alone. This still had just been put in, and represented the small fortune of the family. I did not know that then."

"She came to meet me and asked me what I wanted."

"What have you got?" I replied.

"Beer—weiss beer—mineral water."

"No whiskey?"

"No."

"None in that room there?" and I started up to go into the still. She barred the way quick as lightning, and I noticed then that she was dressed as a man, with a pair of blue overalls stuffed into heavy boots. A long apron had concealed that fact before. She untied it and threw it away.

"My suspicions were confirmed at once, and I resolved to go in. Taking out my match safe I struck a light and advanced to the door, warning her away, telling her it was foolish for a woman to oppose me; that I was an agent of the government and was in the legitimate discharge of my duties. My duty to-night was to destroy the still and worm.

"All the answer she made was to blow the match out and close with me. When I found that I had to use force I found I couldn't. She had me in a vice-like embrace. Of course I did not attempt any blows, and I doubt if they would have been very dangerous ones had I been ruffian enough to resort to such warfare. It became a fair wrestling match, and, although I was something of an athlete, I use no exaggeration when I tell you that by the use of some mysterious twist or lock known to her I was thrown clear over her head and landed partially on my own, remaining stunned upon the sanded floor for some time. When I came to, she was bathing my head with all the tenderness of an angel.

"It is needless to state that I did not break the still up that night. I made a report, freeing them from suspicion, but stated that I would keep my eye upon the family."

"And in order to do it all right," said the old man, "he's goin' to join dot same family. Ain'd it so, Mina?"



AN INTERRUPTED BATH.
From "Punch By Gaslight."

But no response ; only a rustle from the German newspaper.

"Your introduction was certainly very classic," I remarked to the young gauger, as I shook his hand on leaving.

"How so?"

"It was Græco-Roman style."

He laughed and disappeared in the saloon.

My artistic companion was glum, and I tried to cheer him up. You see another ideal had been smashed. Finally he grunted out :

"I say, what *throws* of agony those lovers had."

"You are right ; when are they to be married?"

"In the fall, of course."

CHAPTER VIII

PETTY FRAUDS OF NEW YORK.

The small swindlers of a great city form an army, and those of New York constitute a very formidable one, indeed. According to a local detective of a statistical turn there are nearly, if not quite, 10,000 people in the metropolis who depend entirely on their skill in the art of "beating" for a living. Of this great body of enemies of the public purse more than half devote themselves to the petty swindles with whose existence the average citizen is generally familiar enough, frequently to his sorrow. These parasites on the public, who scorn to toil, waste more energy and mental effort in avoiding to do so than any of their victims do in earning honestly the spoil they extract from them.

"It is for all the world like gambling," said the detective above alluded to, to the writer. "Any one of them could make a better living on the square, but they couldn't have the fun skinning people out of it, and the excitement of being in constant danger of discovery. That is the true secret of a professional beat's existence. Then, again, the knowledge that he is smarter than the majority of men flatters him. I have seen one of them actually hug himself for hours over ten cents he had 'bilked' some 'flat' out of, simply because the 'flat' had been suspicious, and had to be manipulated skillfully before he gave up."

The various forms which the petty swindles of the metropolis assume present an interesting subject for study. There, for instance, is the so-called furniture swindle. Not long ago an indignant lady appeared at a prominent furniture warehouse and demanded to know why a certain bed-room set, which she had selected and paid for two days before, had not been sent to her house. She produced a receipt, written on blank paper and signed with the scrawling initials salesmen in large establishments usually affect. The sum receipted for was only about two-thirds of what the furniture in question was really held at. She had entered the establishment, and been greeted by a polite gentleman just inside of the door. The stranger had accompanied her around, pointing out desirable bargains and naming such low prices that she had felt sorry that she had not money enough to buy the entire store out. She finally pitched on one set and paid for it. The polite stranger scrawled her a receipt, took her address and saw her to a car. After waiting for her purchase to be sent to her until she got tired, she set out to make inquiries about it.

The salesmen of the establishment were passed in review before her, but she had failed to identify any of them as her particular one. It then became evident that she had been the victim of a clever outside swindler, and very little inquiry demonstrated that she was not alone in her misfortune. The same ingenious knave had made his appearance at at least five other establishments, with similar results. He must have been conversant with the business, for in all cases he selected warehouses where a number of salesmen are employed, and where the appearance of a stranger among them would not arouse suspicion, as he would be supposed to be a new clerk.

"It is really an old trick revived," said one of the furniture men, "and years ago was played frequently and with great success. Before the war furniture stores and cabinet ware-rooms used to be left open to the public, and people came in and went unattended. If they wanted to buy anything they had to call for a salesman by ringing one of the hand-bells scattered about. The swindlers found it easy to work under those circumstances, and they went at it with such boldness that the present system of employing many salesmen and keeping them constantly on the watch had to be introduced. Now the game can never be played twice in the same place."

Another old swindle which is being revived, with much of the

ancient success, is the mock auction. When the newspapers and the law combined some years ago to stamp mock auctions out, they were one of the most lucrative forms which the swindlers of the city assumed. A mock auctioneer was a sort of pirate chief, with a crew devoted to him, and the public to forey on. His craft generally sailed under some such seductive name as "The Original Oregon Cheap Jack," "Grandfather Whitehead's Cabinet" and the like. One in Chatham square bore the appropriate title of "The Golden Fleece," the public supplying the lambs. In those old days mock auctions were far from being petty swindles.

But at present they are, though they are out-growing that humble condition fast. A year or so ago one was opened in Chatham street, near Worth. It was a dingy little shop, haunted by ill-looking men, clad in the height of Five Points' elegance, over whom a one-eyed Jew presided as auctioneer. The window presented a tempting array of watches and jewelry of a very fair order, picked up at pawnbrokers' sales.

A flag over the door announced that a "magnificent bankrupt stock of watches, jewelry and silverware" was to be disposed of by peremptory sale to-day. To-day means every day, for the flag flapped there till it rotted from its staff.

The business done at this place was at times quite lively. When one of the scouts announced the approach of an eligible victim, in the person of some green Jerseyman or clam magnate from the Sound, the one-eyed auctioneer would start off at a gallop, ripping out a wild shriek to arrest the attention of the victim as he passed the store. The display in the window and the announcement on the flag would lure him in, and he was either a very fortunate or a very wise man if he left the place as rich as he entered it.

Really good watches and jewelry would be put up for sale, bid for, disposed of at reasonable prices, and delytly exchanged for others which would have been dear at the price of old brass.

Now there are no end of mock auction rooms on the east and west sides; in all of them the nefarious business is carried on in the same lawless style that induced their suppression ten years ago. There are the same suspicious-looking bogus bidders, the same genteel loungers who raise a bid now and then, and the same voluble auctioneer, gorged with cheap witticisms and smutty jokes, which he discharges as the occasion seems propitious.

The business has not yet assumed the alarming proportions it once attained to, but it is growing, and cannot fail soon to attract the attention of the police, now that their notice is directed to it.

Other forms of mock auctions are those of pictures, pianos, furniture and cigars. Mock auctions of pictures are always held in stores which happen to be temporarily vacant, and which are rented for the brief period the swindler requires for his work. As soon as he sells his stock out he decamps, to avoid the inevitable meeting with some duped customer.

In no case is a picture offered for sale at one of these auctions worth the canvas, or rather oil-cloth, it is painted on, for the majority of them are smeared on the cheapest sort of carriage covering. They are used to sell the frames, which are manufactured in factories in large quantities, gilded with Dutch metal, by contract, and sold in a hurry, as a few rainy days in a store-room turn their golden glory to verdigris. Cappers or bogus bidders are used in this as in every form of mock auction, and the vilest daubs, in the most worthless frames, sometimes bring as much as \$200 and even \$300 by judicious and cunning running up.

In the piano and furniture auctions good dummy or sample articles are exhibited, and comparatively valueless ones of similar appearance foisted upon the purchaser in their place. There are firms here who make a business of manufacturing such articles. Piano auctions are usually held in temporarily untenanted warerooms which have been used by reputable dealers in new and second-hand pianos. Furniture sales are conducted in houses leased for the purpose.

Cigar auctions are held in all sorts of queer corners of the city, wherever the auctioneer can get hold of a place to operate in. The weeds they dispose of would be rejected by a Chinese vender with a corner cigar stand in Baxter street. Many of them are actually made of the Manilla paper used for wrapping purposes in cheap groceries. The paper is stained brown and run through a machine, which imparts to it the veining of real tobacco leaf, and the filling is of chopped stems and discarded cuttings, which even the lowest tenement-house cigar-makers can find no use for.

One of the most flagrant of the minor swindles of the metropolis is that which fishes for its victims with the seductive bait of a "business opportunity." The extent to which it is carried, and the success which



THE BELLE OF THE BOWERY.—(P. 61.)



attends it, are almost incredible. It usually employs two people. One is a man who has an office in a reputable neighborhood, and the other a plausible "beat." The first furnishes the capital for the advertisements and the theatre of operations, and also endorses the respectability of his associate. This worthy usually has a patent to develop, which requires a little money to start; a dramatic company to put on the road for an out of town tour, or some small manufacturing business to establish. He only requires a couple of hundred dollars for his purpose, and his dupe is to be the treasurer or cashier of the concern. If the latter agrees, the drain on his purse is begun at once. There are bills to be paid, and purchases to be made, all of which are conducted in due form. The victim is soon tired out and his purse exhausted, and the swindler has the one excuse, "Well, your capital wasn't big enough. If you could pay in a couple of hundred more now we'd be all right." There is no redress. The plundered man has paid no money directly to his plunderer, though the latter has received his share of every dollar.

People who advertise pawn tickets for sale are generally frauds. The tickets are in many cases supplied by pawn-brokers to any one who may apply for them with sufficient interest to enjoy their confidence. They are all for such redeemed pledges as would not pay the expense of sale. The advertiser sells the tickets for a mere song. The purchaser, if he is suspicious, may not be willing to buy the ticket without seeing the article it represents. In that case he is taken to the pawnbroker, to whom he pays twenty-five cents for the privilege of examination. This examination invariably leads to rejection. In that case the ticket-swindler gets half of the search money.

Women are the chief practicers of this swindle, and it is so extensive a one to-day that there are certain pawnshops in this city which have their regular tools and do more business with bogus tickets than in the real traffic for which they are licensed. Really honest people who desire to sell pawn tickets can always find purchasers for them in the proprietors of the many "old curiosity shops" scattered all over the city. These speculators make a business of redeeming useful articles from pawn and selling them at a moderate profit on their outlay.

There is a class of female swindlers who advertise as housekeepers. These are almost always of the lowest order of confidence women.

They have an associate of the other sex, and occupy furnished rooms of which their tenancy is a fleeting one. If their advertisement secures an answer they induce the respondent to call, and engage him in a conversation, in the middle of which the male associate enters. The woman at once accuses her caller of improprieties, her husband (?) resents them, and the dupe is glad to pay for his escape, unless he happens to know enough of life to be aware that his swindlers dare not tempt publicity and are only trying to bluff him. Often a case of this style of blackmail comes before our courts in the course of a year, but victims continue to make it profitable for this style of fraud to pay the papers for advertising them.

Matrimonial advertisements, on the part of both male and female, are usually inserted for the purpose of inducing a correspondence, which the advertiser may utilize for the purpose of extorting blackmail.

The begging-letter fraud has come to be a peculiar figure among our local petty swindlers. He, or she, is of English origin, where that style of swindler has flourished for more than a century, in spite of the vigorous pens of Fielding and Dickens, both of which great authors loved to lay bare their shameless fraudulency, and the merciless administration of the laws against mendicancy. There is as regularly organized a body of begging-letter writers in this city as there is in London. The members comprise both sexes, and are generally people of more than average education and intelligence. Their assurance not only borders but actually overreaches on the incredible. They write to everybody whom they think likely to assist them, or who has, in fact, any money at all, without the slightest excuse or claim upon their charity. The late Commodore Vanderbilt was flooded with letters from them. His son's daily correspondence always contained similar communications. In the same way all our leading merchants, bankers, and rich men generally, are applied to constantly by these infamous beggars; and well-known divines, like Dr. Deems, the Rev. Morgan Dix, and others, are constantly plied with demands for charity from people whose only desire it is to live without working for it.

The professional writers of begging letters are undoubtedly the most depraved, worthless and utterly shameful of the petty swindlers who prey upon the city. They are people whose education and natural gifts render it easy for them to earn honest livings. Yet they pervert

them to the vilest purposes. They are rank hypocrites, using the most revolting professions of piety to back their demands. The money they extract from the loose purses of foolish philanthropists invariably goes for purposes of debauchery.

As a local paper once said :

“ They are the foulest and nastiest of all the foul and nasty birds which subsist, buzzard-like, on the offal of the town. Whining, despicable hounds, compared with whom a sneak thief is a gentleman.” Yet these sanctimonious miscreants find dupes who possibly weep over the woes they offer as excuses for their appeals, and who certainly contribute constantly to their support.

As a class, the begging-letter writers live well. Some years ago, when the officials of St. John's Guild began to investigate the case of distress in New York, they found many of these wretches inhabiting elegant apartments, enjoying the comforts and even the luxuries of life, purchased with money wasted on them by silly charity, while scores of the deserving poor were actually dying, like murrained sheep, for lack of sufficient food. The vigorous press denunciation that followed the exposures of the Guild dealt the vile business quite a blow ; but it soon recovered itself, and is now, if anything, more flourishing than ever.

There is one family, consisting of a mother and three daughters, who occupy an up-town flat, dress in the newest fashion and are familiar to theatre and concert-goers, who have no other means of subsistence than that which they wheedle out of the world by begging letters.

Another swindler in the same line is a greasy old scoundrel who frequents a well known chop-house up-town, and can frequently be seen writing his letters there. But perhaps the rankest rascal of all is a fellow who affects the society of actors, and can be seen daily in Union Square, spending in grogeries there the charity his mendicant talent had procured for him.

A familiar fraud on the New York public is that perpetrated by the bogus smugglers. This typical “ beat ” is in all cases a jovial personage in a blue flannel suit. His favorite hunting-ground is in down-town offices, where cunning clerks yearn for bargains. He blasts his binnacle, shivers his timbers and swears other strange sea oaths after the most approved style, chews tobacco like hay, walks with a rolling gait and is always redolent of rum. But somehow or other he never

looks, to the initiated, like what schoolboys would call a "real sailor." He tells in a mysterious whisper of how he was steward or "bo'son" or some other rollicking functionary on a sea-going craft, and how, by virtue of his position, he enjoys enviable opportunities to introduce rare and valuable commodities into the country. These commodities he now has for sale at advantageously low prices, provided his patrons will not "split" on him. They usually consist of India shawls, bolts of the best English broadcloth, boxes of rare cigars, or bottles of bay rum, and command a ready sale. The shawls are the best Paisley, the cloth always turns out to be pure shoddy, the cigars clear cabbage, and the bay rum a bad mixture.

These worthies are in the market to-day, and thriving as of yore. One evening the writer came upon a party of them in a beer saloon on Third avenue, near Twenty-third street, which he learned is their favorite resort. He learned, furthermore, that they are a gregarious lot, working in pleasant amity, and meeting every night to discuss the swindles of the day. They were at latest accounts "working a lay" as they technically express it, in the sale of Havana cigarettes and foreign cordials, both of which have their origin in New York. Their business is a highly profitable one. The wares they retail cost next to nothing, and the prices they obtain for them, though they would be ridiculously low if the articles were genuine and imported, are still higher than the dupes would have to pay for excellent domestic ones purchased in a regular way. But they pay for the romance of buying illegal wares, and eventually discover that the whistle is a costly one.

A singularly ingenious crop of very small swindles has been developed by the recent hard times. There are men, for instance, who are in the habit of riding next to the Slawson box in a bobtail car, and accommodately putting the fares of other passengers in for them. There is not one of the bobtail lines which does not preserve at least thousands of bad nickels as souvenirs of this game. The Broadway stage lines encountered an equally novel swindle on their vehicles. They sold tickets, by the dollar's worth, at a discount of nearly fifty per cent. Men purchased packages at that rate, and took their places next the fare boxes in the stages. Whenever a passenger permitted it they took his money and calmly pouched it, dropping one of their tickets into the box instead. One who was arrested acknowledged to a gain of



TALMAGE'S VISIT TO THE DANCE HOUSES.—(P. 65.)

from \$1.50 to \$4 a day by this means, "according to his luck," as he expressed it.

The "bundle beat" is another character of city crime. His method of procedure is simplicity itself. He is always decently dressed, with the appearance of a light porter at a dry-goods store, and travels with his arm full of bundles. His first business is to learn the *personale* of any quiet street where private dwellings of the middle class abound. Then he rings at a door and delivers one of the bundles, with the information that Mr. Blodger, who lives there, bought such and such articles, and as he was short of money desired them to be sent home and paid for there. If Mr. Blodger happens to be home and to be the physical equal of the "bundle beat," that person generally has a rough time of it. But if he is out, as the swindler usually makes sure he is, his wife or landlady accepts the trust unhesitatingly and pays the required sum, which is always kept small to allay suspicion. The bundle, of course, is worthless.

The pocket-book dropping games, and the various other confidence operations by which verdant visitors to the city are constantly gulled have been too frequently described to call for dissection here. There is a shameful swindle by which poor men, alone, are the sufferers, which makes its appearance with great regularity. This is the registry office swindle.

The originator of this device was one Henry Acklin, an Englishman, who had graduated at petty swindling in the London police courts. His system was beautifully simple, and is that followed by his many imitators, who crop out from time to time, and pursue a prosperous career until some victim invokes the law for their suppression. The operator advertises in several of the leading daily journals the establishment of a registry office for procuring situations for clerks, bookkeepers, salesmen, porter, etc., and announces that he has positions ready for a number of each class. On applying to this philanthropist, the seeker after employment finds that a so-called registry fee of two dollars is demanded, and if he is green enough pays it, when his name is entered with much formality upon the books. It is hardly necessary to add that this is the end of it, so far as any situation is concerned. He is told to call again, and may keep on doing so for half a generation without getting any satisfaction—that is, if the office doesn't close before the next rent day comes around, which is likely to be the case.

Not long ago the discovery was made that a man in Fulton street had for a long time been driving a thriving trade by the manufacture of bogus police, fire and other badges. Among his stock were found excellent counterfeits of the badges provided for Inspectors of Weights and Measures. Fraudulent officials of this class have long ranked among the petty swindlers of New York, assisted by these imitations of the insignia worn by the duly authorized incumbents of the positions. In the course of his cruise in search of petty swindles the writer encountered a curious case in point.

It was a corner grocery in Essex street, into which the swindle seeker had stepped to lave his parched throat with a draught of the lager retailed in the back room. An individual in a dingy and baggy blue flannel suit, under whose lappel glittered a badge as big as a saucepan lid, occupied the front of the counter. An excited German stood behind it. He was in that state of frenzy that he might have been taking Zulu as well as any other known language. More by inference than anything else, the reporter gleaned the knowledge that the man with the badge was an inspector of weights and measures, and that the German was very angry with him indeed.

"I won't pay one cent," he vociferated; "I paid one of you chaps two dollars yesterday, I tell you."

"Then you was stuck," said the inspector, calmly picking a herring from a box and commenced to nibble it.

"I was stuck?"

"You was bilked, beat, fooled, you know."

"How is that?"

"Because that feller yesterday was a fraud."

"That is what they all say. He told me that the fellow before him was a fraud."

"Well, maybe he was."

"Then what one of you is not a fraud?"

"I ain't one. Can't you see that by my badge?"

The grocer clasped his hands and rolled his eyes appealingly. "Ach Gott!" he growled. "They all have badges."

Some further parley followed, when the grocer handed the man with the badge a couple of half dollars and the latter retired with graceful haste. The host had hardly drawn the reporter's beer when another man with a badge, in company with a policeman, entered.



THE ABDUCTOR'S VICTIM.

From "Hush Money, or, The Murder in the Street."



"I say," he asked, "wasn't there a feller here a minute ago who said he was an inspector?"

The grocer gasped an affirmative.

"Did you notice which way he went?"

"That way."

"Then we've got him, the blaggard," exclaimed the policeman
"He'll stop at the next store, and I'll have him."

And he shot out, while his companion turned to the grocer and said, jauntily:

"Well, you might as well trot out them weights now."

"What?"

"Show up the weights. I want to inspect 'em, you know."

A gleam of lurid desperation flashed in the grocer's eye. "Oh! you want to inspect them, do you?" he said hoarsely; "vell, begin right away."

And he hurled a three-pound dish at the inspector's head. The latter dodged it, when a fusilade of small weights began to rattle among the soap and candle boxes behind him. When the writer left by the back door the grocer's ammunition was exhausted, the genuine inspector had fled, and a file of boys were making short work of the water-melons in front of the door.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FLASH MINISTER.

Before touching the subject of this sketch I wish the reader to make no mistake by imagining that I intend assailing the church or religion itself. Therefore all genuine religious subjects are sacred to me, and although I don't go to church as often as I should, and have not yet imitated Mr. Bonner by giving \$100,000 to any particular one, still I admire square, solid goodness, and I will be the last to attack it or its exponents by voice or pen.

But I do hate, in some instances, and envy in others, what I have been pleased to call the flash minister.

Undoubtedly our distinguished friend Talmage is the best living example of the class. Mr. Talmage is coarse, low and vulgar in his ideas; there is a broad streak of the buffoon running down his back,

and all his clerical education does not hide the antics of a clown; and yet this theological mountebank has 80,000 people crush to see him in London, while ministers whose shces he is not worthy to shine are struggling along in this country, starving on country circuits with a wife and five or six children to help them to do it.

And why? because one is the unobtrusive, silent worker in the vineyard, and the other is the sensational jack-in-the-box, pounding the velvet plush of the pulpit with the Bible, and yelling, "Here we are again."

Any one who takes the beautiful stories of the parables of the Scriptures, and attempts to improve upon them by turning them into familiar language that would disgrace a police report, and who speaks of the Almighty and the angels as if they and the minister had lived on the same block;—any one who does this is bound to attract attention, and that is all the flash minister wants.

Talmage started off well in Philadelphia by going over a dam in a row boat.

"He went over that dam so recklesslee
That now he's boss howler in the ministree.

Eight or nine months in the year the flash minister wrestles with his lambs and then he is voted a vacation and sent to Europe. When I think about this delightful yearly trip, I sometimes regret that I did not yield to the importunities of an ancient aunt of mine and embrace the church while a young man.

I am sure I could do the vacation part admirably, and could even superintend the auction sale of pews with dignity, which is another portion of the flash minister's duties.

Sometimes he is young, handsome, poetic and dreamy. In such instances his pathway in life is pleasant or otherwise just as you choose to look at the subject. I knew one of the sentimental kind in Philadelphia. He always smelt of new mown hay extract, and his white cravats were dazzling. I remember now that his sermons were all about harps, and humming birds, honeysuckles, and golden gates swinging open upon musical hinges to let us all in. No scaring the life out of you in that church. Well, this young man, who is the lemonade type of the flash minister, confided in me once that he was truly wretched, that life was a burden, and that he sometimes thought of suicide.

I recall that I looked him steadily in the eye and said:

"Which one of the lambs is it? Her name."

But I was wrong. He didn't understand me. In a plaintive voice he told me how the adoration of the young women was overpowering him. It was within two days of Christmas then and he had already received 200 pairs of worked slippers, 37 pen-wipers and 146 flowered silk dressing gowns. What could he do? The landlady looked upon the whole affair with suspicion and the stuff was piling up so about the room that he didn't have space to turn about.

I reasoned with him, but to no purpose. Nothing could shake his melancholy. I distinctly remember that I suggested getting up a raffle in a neighboring saloon, but he did not look upon the idea with favor. Finally, he gave the articles away to the poor of his parish, and for a year after, it was possible to see some rheumatic truckman leaning back at his door with his short, black pipe in his mouth, and wearing a dressing-gown that looked as if it had been made for the Shah of Persia.

This young man had no Beecher in him and couldn't stand the pressure. The admiration of the ladies was his ruin. He left the ministry, took to drink, and when last I heard of him he was billiard marker in a Pottstown saloon.

Now Beecher is another type of the flash minister, despite his great intellectuality. He is far in advance of his day, and dares not avow from his pulpit what he really believes to be so. The worked slippers and dressing-gowns never worried him when a young man and don't now. He has probably embraced all the opportunities that have presented themselves. Mr. Beecher has done a great deal of Europe in his summers, but he prefers the White Mountains now, where the air ameliorates his hay fever.

I have mentioned illustrious types, but the woods are full of flash ministers, who have no more business in the pulpit than I have in a French convent. You will not find them in the country. The city's the place to air bran new theological ideas, to get in trouble with the deacons, to stand trial and have it reported in the newspapers, to indulge in flirtation dalliance with plump, married sisters, to gradually build up a notoriety, and so by insensible degrees arrive at the stage of popularity when it is possible to make the church as much like a theatre as possible and put a brass-horn blower in the gallery to lead the choir.

During the week this choir sings in "Billee Taylor" at wicked play-houses.

I expect to see further advances made by the subject of our sketch. Sermons will become as spicy as a bottle of chow-chow, and a full brass band will supply the music, all hymns being set to operatic music.

Then, as he prances about with waving arms and legs, flying hair and strident voice, the flash minister will be happy.

CHAPTER X.

THE BEGGAR'S REVEL.

The last up train on the Metropolitan elevated had left and we had to foot it.

Going up South Fifth Avenue, with the usual eye to business, we couldn't have missed the sign if we had tried.

It was a single board, split through the middle and held in a lop-sided drunken fashion over a beetle-browed black alley between two ramshackle two-storied frame houses. An oil lamp in a cracked reflector lantern flickered in the gusty night above it. Its blinky flame looked for all the world like the unsteady ogle of some leering drunkard. The lantern itself, perched owlishly on a couple of twisted iron legs, was one-sided, as if the oil had got into its head and was about to upset it, which, if lanterns possessed any sense of smell would have been no wonder.

To carry out the general delirium tremens illusion the two houses had sunken on their foundations until one threatened to fall upon the other and send it reeling into the yard behind the fence covered with showbills in which some cats were either serenading or trying to kill one another.

Not being an authority on feline eloquence I leave it to the reader, who having paid his money may take his choice which it was.

The light having consented to stop staggering for a moment, we read on the board, daubed in a rusty, black ground, in those spidery



THE BLIND BEGGAR'S REVEL.—(P. 68.)



white letters only a French sign painter has the cheek to take money for pretending to paint,

"Aux Aveugles."

It certainly was a good place for a blind man; no one with enough eyesight to warn him would be likely to venture into it.

No one, that is, but an old rounder and your artist.

For us there was but one course, which is indirectly designated by the following document now before me :

"Mr. O. Rounder, in act. with H. Needle, Tailor,

To 1 Pair Pantaloons, - - - \$10."

There was a name at the bottom of the document but the boy tore it off and promised to bring it back in the morning; from the fact that he didn't I infer that he is either dead, or that it is of no importance to Mr. Needle—it certainly isn't to me.

"I hope you've got your sketch-book," I remarked to Sketchley, as we floundered up the alley.

"I wish I had a cork jacket," he replied. "It would be more useful just at present."

Which represents the case in a nutshell of eloquence, and explains how Mr. Needle came to send me a bill for a pair of pantaloons.

If Jordan is a marker to that alley, I pity the pilgrims who have to travel it without boots, and don't wonder that so many folks prefer the other place.

Coleridge claimed to have discovered something like seventy-two different stench in the city of Cologne. His olfactories would have got tired of counting up on that passage if he had ever tried to reduce stink to a mathematical certainty there.

However, we got through it and came out in a square court, with buildings all around it. The buildings were all frame ones, tumble down, with crooked, squinting windows, and rickety balconies, nailed together of all sorts of odds and ends of plank, cropping out in places on them like the wens on a beggar's legs.

There was a tree in the middle of the court, a gaunt, sapless, scrawny affair, whose only foliage was rags, tin cans and remnants of old wardrobe. From the first crotch of this tree a beam sprouted out and drove its other end into the front of the rear house, as if it had a grudge against it and was stabbing it to the heart. A rusty ring

creaked in a corroded bolt in this beam, and a frayed rope dangled from the ring, and made snaky convulsions as the night wind toyed with it.

It seemed to be in a ghastly, eager way, to be squirming about in a vain search for the corpse it had lost.

The moon, a bright, full moon, was right behind this gibbet, and against its face, an object perched upon the beam, made a hideous silhouette. It was a long, lean cat, which had jumped up at the noise of our approach and stood with arched back and a tail swollen out to the size of a policeman's club, spitting savagely at us.

"Look out," cried Sketchley.

And to use a forcible vulgarism he yanked me to one side.

He sketched me just in the nick of time. The cat went sailing by where I had been, landed on the ground with a thud, and disappeared ahead of a train of diabolical howls.

"Hey, the devil! What then is this all about? Say then!"

It is a hoarse voice that says this, a voice like the grating of a rusty prison lock. It says it in French, and it seems to say it somewhere from the region of the ground we stand on.

"Thousand devils! Are you then deaf?"

The voice is getting mad now, and speaks in an accent that might inspire an able-bodied bull with envy. A dog barks too, a currish sharp bark, and looking down, we see a flary light at the bottom of a flight of dubious, wooden steps as we stand looking, but halts a couple of feet away, barking in a way which threatens to turn him inside out, like a true cur, never coming near enough to bite or to be kicked.

By this time we have made the situation out.

In the doorway of the cellar to which the unreliable staircase leads, the thing to which the voice belongs holds a glittering candle with a brandy bottle stick in its hand.

The thing might be a man, growing out of the ground for he ends about where the tops of ordinary people's boots come. He has only one eye, a deep, inflamed cavity occupying the place where the other ought to be. The hand with which he shades the candle is gnarled and knotted like a wierd warped cedar. The face the candle lights is that of a baboon—only dirtier than any baboon with an atom of respect for its race ever permits its face to become.

I explain, in my fluent Amity street French, that we are wayfarers

in search of fluid refreshment, and as we both have relatives in the blind asylum, the sign at the door lured us in as promising appropriate hospitality.

"Ask them if they'll treat," calls a clear, woman's voice, in English.

We are inside the door before the candle cavalier, whom we now see to be an excessively inebriated man with legs which end at the knees in leather pads, has time to repeat the query.

Promptness in emergency is, as you know, a marked attribute of your artist and myself.

Especially when the emergency has what I may paradoxically term a fluid basis.

I knew the place the moment I set foot in it. It was the famous rendezvous of the French beggars of New York, the tavern of "The Blind Men."

It was a deep cellar, almost square, in which we found ourselves. From the low, bare beams festoons of cobwebs made hammocks for the dust and soot to rest in. At the farther end from a waning fire of cinders, showers of sparks were sucked up a black, gaping chimney from a sort of gridiron hearth.

A sooty pot swung over this fire at the end of a crane. An old woman stirred it with a copper ladle, while half a dozen almost naked children squatted like cats in the warm ashes. Fierce waves of heat swept out from the glowing pile, loaded, as sea swells are with wreck, with odors of rancid grease, burning fat, garlic, tainted meat, stale beer, staler fish, ranker tobacco and the indescribable reek of unwashed humanity.

There were heaps of damp rags in the corners, which steamed as if they were stewing into a devil's broth in their own juice.

"Now, then; if it's treat, talk quick. Mine's gin."

She sat on the arm of a high, red-painted, old-fashioned easy-chair. One arm was wound around the neck of a frightful, sightless, withered, paralytic old man, who crouched in his seat like one of the Aquarium chimpanzees in its straw, wrapped from neck to heels in a filth-encrusted army overcoat, gibbering and grimacing, lapping his pendulous, alcohol-swollen lip, with his loose tongue. His face and his palsied hands were the only things about him that moved. And it seemed a fortunate thing for humanity that they were all of him that was left alive.

Yet this girl of eighteen, fresh-faced, rosy-cheeked, bright eyed, twined her round arm about this satyr's throat as tenderly as if he had been the handsomest of sweethearts.

And seeing us staring at her she stooped and kissed the slaverling lips with the bravado of a Bacchante.

To make the contrast more striking, she wore a train dress of pink silk, the evident relic of some theatrical wardrobe, grease-splashed, mud-bedraggled and tattered, but fitting her full form, and looking by contrast with the squalor all around her pure as her fair face looked amid the debased ones which were turned on us from every side.

"It's the old fake's doxy," hoarsely whispered a burly ruffian, with a wooden leg, who was stretched on a bench just inside the door, fumi-gating himself through the medium of a black pipe, strong enough to draw a loaded truck with.

"D—n it, man, set 'em up, or she'll be at ye like the born devil she is."

We set them up.

The setting up was performed by a stalwart person of Alsatian origin with a blonde beard and long wavy yellow hair, who took our money first and made sure of its genuineness. This operation led us to notice, in a far corner, a species of bar—a counter the size of a packing case, with a top covered with battered zinc. There were no bottles visible behind it. The "Blind Men" evidently were not trustworthy men, *teo*.

The blonde man fetched his supply from some receptacle underneath it, over which a fat woman, with an artificial rose in her shaggy hair and great brass hoop ear-rings, sat guard most vigilantly.

The blonde individual handed our money to her and she dropped it into the cavity between her breasts as if she was posting a contribution to the Irish sufferers.

Everybody drank, and nobody seemed particular what they drank out of as long as it held plenty and wasn't clean.

There were tin cans, tumblers, goblets, beer glasses, china cups, everything, in short, that would hold liquid. And the people who drank out of them seemed specially created to find use for the battered, nicked and cracked receptacles themselves.

It was such a beggar's revel as Victor Hugo describes in the open-

ing of "Notre Dame;" an orgie of squalor, mimic misery enjoying the fruits of its cunning as the hog wallows in its congenial slime.

There were men and women here, or rather the distortions and remnants of men and women, who were as familiar to us as if we had known them all our lives. There was the blind man, with the venerable hair and beard, who fiddles his way about, led by his faithful dog. He had a woman's comb jabbed in his long, silvery locks now, and lay back with his hoary head against the swollen breasts of a red-faced woman with a crutch in her lap, who had his battered hat perched on her unkempt hair. They were drinking what passed for brandy out of the same chalice. The faithful dog was earning the meed of his day's toil at the expense of a cat in the fireplace.

But to describe in detail this congress of cripples would be to secure for the readers a nightmare they have certainly not deserved.

It haunts me yet.

The two big pine tables, set together and lettered with the scraps of a meal which reminded me of one of the obscene feasts of the buzzards. The score of figures round it, deformed with the malignant deformity of devils, drinking the liquor whose very exhalations made the air drunk like water. The jargon of hoarse, weak, shrill and broken voices, mouthing the argot of the Parisian slums, larded here and there with those vigorous English oaths the foreigner always learns first. The greasy-chimneyed oil lamps, swinging from the roof with iron chains; beyond, in the red light of the fire, the bar, with the fat woman and her savings bank bust, and the lean children squabbling like imps with the dogs.

And blazing like an angel newly-fallen in this rout of devils, the pink dress, caressing her palsied lover, burying his shameful, shaking head in the clod of her wild, copper-colored hair.

Who was she?

That is just what I have been trying to find out ever since.

Pierre Carre has been the despot of this colony of beggars for upwards of a decade. What rum has left of him in the tottering paralytic rules them still.

He used to navigate himself about the streets in a go-cart, which he propelled by a lever worked with his hands. But when his blood turned to alcohol and his strength gave out, an old woman pushed him

about. The crone claimed to be his wife, and she certainly came as near to it as any woman can without owning a set of marriage lines.

One night, in a fit of drunken fury, Pierre Carre found enough strength left in his withered arms to strangle her.

The idea of his murdering her, however, seemed so preposterous to the coroner's jury that they returned a verdict of accidental death, in defiance of the ten livid marks on the dead woman's throat and of the ten deep pits bored by the beggar king's black nails.

Then Esmeralda turned up.

She came into "The Blind Men" one night, pushing the go-cart before her as unconcernedly as if she had been at that work all her life. She was ragged, shivering under a single calico dress and a thin, ragged shawl. But she was all the prettier for it.

"She was a daisy in them days," exclaimed the gentleman with the wooden leg and the pipe, who is an English "codger" with a great contempt for the "foreigners" with whom his lot is temporarily cast. "But the gin's commencing to fetch her now."

It always does fetch them.

And Esmeralda drinks it like soda water or root beer.

This, and the fact that she is Pierre Carre's daily and nightly companion, is about all the denizens of "The Blind Men" hostelry know of her.

Except that she speaks French and English with equal fluency and is artistically profane in both languages.

From the time she takes the old man up in her arms and carries him like a bundle of dirty rags or a sack of offal up to the mysterious room on the floor above, which no one penetrates, and in whose fastnesses the mendicant monarch is supposed to have a fortune secreted, until she reappears wheeling him into the cellar in his day-car of state, she speaks to no one except to those from whom in the street she craves charity for her poor father.

What link can it be that binds this girl to her revolting paramour? Can it be traced back to some disappointment which overthrew what little reason the woman's unbridled temper had left her and sent her to the gutter on a high tide of gin?

For she has the temper of a devil.

Sometimes she flies into a passion even with her helpless lord, and whangs him about the ears like a schoolboy.

But as a rule she finds vent for her temper on the other women and on the children and dogs.

And as a majority of the first are cripples, while the others are too weak to resist, she has come to rule the room with a rod of muscle and bad language.

Once a nobby young beggar, an aristocrat with one leg and a false blind eye, attempted to make an impression on her.

He attempted to make his impression with his engaging manners. She made hers with a club.

And, holding a full hand, clubs proved to be trumps, only the young man spelled it with an h.

There is a belief entertained that Esmeralda is Pierre Carre's daughter, but it has no foundation whatever, except that which is given it by the prolific imagination of the people who have made a fine art of romancing for the benefit of the charitably disposed.

The clock, without a minute hand, and with a half-pound weight for a pendulum, was trying to say it was two o'clock when your artist and myself turned to leave.

The movement was the signal for a general outbreak and a score of voices called to us for charity.

The noise seemed to arouse old Pierre Carre from his palsied lethargy, and he mumbled something which Esmeralda seemed to find intelligible. At any rate she fetched the table a bang with her gin goblet that sent the glass flying in splinters.

"The devil take you all!" she cried in French. "Have not the gentlemen done enough then? Sit down, or by the devil's belly—"

They sat down without asking her to go any further into diabolical anatomy.

The English "codger," however, stumped ahead of us under the pretext of opening the door, and tackled us outside in a hoarse whisper for an alms.

We wouldn't mind giving it if he would tell us something about Esmeralda.

He would if he could. But anathemise his sanguinary optics if he knew much. "All as I does know, he says, "is that a copen once told me she used to walk the curbstone up in Amity street, and that the old fake got struck after her, and he bein' thought to be well fixed she let him have her."

He was standing under the gibbet when he said this, and it seemed a pity that the serpentine rope couldn't reach down and twine itself about his filthy throat for destroying our romance.

But it didn't, and we picked our way out through the alley, leaving the moon to take a last peep at the hostelry of "The Blind Men" over the fence, and listen to the one blind man with long hair saw the "Devil's Dance" out of his cracked fiddle to the accompaniment of trampling feet.

"What are you doing?" I asked of Sketchley.

"Buttoning up my pocket. I'm afraid we might meet a beggar before we get home."

But we didn't.

As the reader has seen, he has better things to do after midnight and knows a trick worth half a dozen of that.

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